

APPENDIX B:
**CELEBRATING STUDENT WRITING ACROSS THE
CURRICULUM**

Writing

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WILLIAM PATERSON UNIVERSITY

Celebrating Student Writing
Across the Curriculum

Prize Winners 2008-2009

TENTH ANNUAL EDITION

Introduction

This is the tenth year in which the Writing Across the Curriculum program has published this magazine in order to recognize both the wonderful writing produced by William Paterson University students in all disciplines and the assignments created by our faculty to nurture this writing. Ten years: a decade of celebrating student writing! The support of our students, faculty, and administration has allowed this little magazine to outlive most literary and scholarly publications in America.

Within these pages you'll find a selection of the best student writing produced on campus in 2008-2009. Each piece here was selected, first, by a faculty member because in some way it fulfilled the teacher's highest expectations for that assignment—most gracefully written, most creatively imagined, most meticulously researched, most insightful. And then each piece was selected again, by a faculty jury—this year, Jennifer DiNoia, Sociology; West Moss, English; and Sarah Valentine, Nursing—that had the time-consuming, but very rewarding, task of reading nearly fifty very fine pieces of writing and then choosing these twelve to represent the best work produced on campus this year.

This year the writing selected for inclusion was produced, for the most part, in General Education and in English courses, which reflects the fact that 60% of the submitted work was from English courses, and nearly 70% from GE. Next year, we hope that a broader range of student writing will be submitted. Nevertheless, there is a striking diversity in the writing here. There is, for instance, Nick Dimichino's riveting oral history, "Unassuming Hero," which traces the minute-by-minute experience of a NYC fireman who narrowly escaped death in the World Trade Towers. There are two wonderful memoirs, Alexa Baird's very moving piece about a child's confrontation with illness, absence, and death, and Julie Minicozzi's powerful essay about her decision not to bear children. There are a pair of delightful short poems—by Kelsey Romond on the death of Harry Kalas and by Adam Cooper on the Periodic Table—and a pair of fine short stories, by James Budd and Jenn Taylor. And there are, in addition, five academic and research essays, from Brian Saccomanno's well-researched film script to several wonderful pieces from Anthropology, History, and Macroeconomics. All in all, a wonderful introduction to the best of what is taught and what is written here at William Paterson. Every piece in this collection will reward you for reading it.

Pay attention also to the teachers' prefaces to each essay. The creativity of these assignments in focusing on the development of student thinking and imagination, as well as the wit, humility, and generosity of the faculty reasons for valuing their students' work, should make us at William Paterson University proud.

Finally, a thank you to the people who made this publication possible and who made working on it fun. Thanks to the three judges who devoted hours to the thoughtful reading of so much fine student writing. Thanks also to the Provost's Office for its continued support of the WAC program for more than two decades, and especially to Provost Ed Weil and Associate Provost Stephen Hahn. And thanks as well to Isabel Tirado, Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences, whose belief in all of our WAC programs has helped sustain us for many years: she is retiring as Dean this year, and we will miss her deeply.

And thanks, finally, to the many faculty and students who offered their work to the contest. Nearly fifty wonderful submissions, all of them good enough to publish, including the ten listed at the end as First Runners-Ups and Honorable Mentions: too good to be neglected, but our budget couldn't support a longer publication. Read the contest rules on the back cover, and next year we hope to see even more fine writing submitted by students and faculty from all departments.

Jim Hauser, English Department
Director, Writing Across the Curriculum, 2008-2009

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This Stop Is—

by Alexa Baird

Course:
Writing Effective Prose
(ENG 110)

Professor:
Gillian Hettinger, English

Student:
Alexa Baird

Memoir:
"This Stop Is—"

Assignment:

Memoir Writing (Second Assignment):

1. Memoir writing is a compilation of snapshot memories. These memories are rich in detail and description and so you'll be building on the descriptive skills you've practiced. Write a subjective description of someone you know well—again, use sensory detail to make that person come alive on the page.
2. Then, put the person you wrote about into a setting, using all your descriptive skills and combine it with a memory. You will bring the memory to life by describing it in "real time," as if you are in the moment. You may focus on a moment, or series of moments. Why are these moments important enough to share? Draft your response.
3. As a final step, polish your memoir, making sure it is rich in detail and description.

Instructor's Comments:

From the start, Alexa was an outstanding writer. In terms of this particular assignment, she more than fulfilled my expectations, writing with a skill remarkable in a freshman. In this short piece, she includes the sensory details I was looking for and, in addition, her use of dialogue is first-rate. She comes obliquely at the subject of her father's death, something which had wounded her deeply. The tenderness of the relationship between Alexa and her father is evident. I also like the pacing of this memoir and the way in which she broke it into short, vivid vignettes.

It had been nine o'clock on a Friday; I remember the hour hand on my father's Rolex and the pale, almost translucent skin of his wrist caught under his watchband.

The part I always remember best about my father are his hands. Large and calloused, with a jagged line on his left that stretched from the base of his thumb to his wrist before ending in a twisted, angry knot of skin; a scar from the night when he put his fist through our kitchen window.

"Is this our stop?"

"No."

I.

My grandmother died long before anyone else, I don't remember her smile or her smell but instead her fat, edematous legs and the sight of her wheelchair folded and abandoned next to her bed.

The passenger car lurched forward with a great jump.

I had stayed home from school with a fever that morning. My father in those days worked a night shift, seven to four, so time with him was something elusive that you had to work for, wait for. That day I had entertained the notion that our trip was a grand adventure. Wonderful and secretive, in that while other adults worked and other children sat in desks, each of them confined to their daily routine, my father and I were on a train going somewhere. The whole broad world was laid before us and there was a mysterious sense of potential there.

"We get off here."

He pulled himself up slowly as the conductor repeated, "this stop is—."

We made our way to the front of the car. Arriving at the door I stuttered to a halt, momentarily taken aback by how far the train was from the platform.

"Come on, Champ." He grunted as he patted my back roughly.

I took a leap, petrified; the cold, stale morning air whipping around my face.

II.

Working one summer I overheard one costumer tell another how a girl they went to school with had apparently killed herself.

"She just took some pills and yeah."

"Shit, really?"

"Yeah."

"I can't believe it. Weird. I had homeroom with her for like ever." She flipped closed her issue of Vogue and reached for People.

Mrs. Ellis was an elderly woman who knew our family through a series of connections and acquaintances. A trail of social bread crumbs I had trouble understanding in those days.

I was often left in her company when my parents' schedules conflicted.

"Can't we go to the park?" I asked eagerly from my spot behind my father's legs

"Not today," he answered ruefully, "Maybe next time, how's that sound?"

We were interrupted by the squeal of the screen door on its hinges. Mrs. Ellis wore a high collar white blouse and a grey skirt, her arms folded daintily around herself as she made her way towards us. I ducked my head shy and embarrassed. I constantly suffered under the impression that I was a bother to almost everyone I came into contact with, although in my defense that woman never really did anything to discourage that notion.

"Just till one, right?" She unfolded her arms and glanced at my father looking slightly uncomfortable.

"Yes." He answered with a sort of wryness as he handed her my coat.

Bending down he hugged me close to his chest, and I could feel the rhythm of his heart beat. Thump, thump, thump.

"I love you, very much." The whiskers of his beard tickled my cheek, and I felt as if I was missing something important. His hands trembled as he squeezed my shoulder one last time before he stood. He nodded to Mrs. Ellis, then turned and started back across the lawn. I was sad to see him go.

III.

My friend Julian's mother died during his final exams week. Liver cancer, 8.3 cm was the largest tumor. "The size of your fist," he explained to me.

He chose not to view her body before they cremated it so he could instead take his Psych exam as it was scheduled, just as the Dean of Student Affairs had suggested to him.

I awoke later to the sound of voices in the kitchen. I had fallen asleep in the living room, the clock on the mantel piece read eight twenty-three.

Someone was playing with my hair. It was my mother, still dressed as she was when she had left our house for work this morning. Her hair done up and mostly hidden under a plain scarf, while her eyes remained unreadable behind a pair of dark teardrop sunglasses. My mother in those days often reminded me of a movie star, she was beautiful, poised, and just as untouchable. In a way I guess my parents were similar in that one aspect, they were both rather fierce and lonely in stature.

As her fingers ghosted over my scalp a warning signal sounded somewhere deep in my subconscious. My mother was not one for physical displays of affection.

"Where's Dad?"

There was a sigh and then, "Your father has been taken to the

hospital," she stated solemnly.

I sat up quickly, "What's wrong? Is he okay? Is he coming home?" I blurted.

"When he's better." If I had not been seven years old and on the verge of a fit I may have found it funny which question she had selected to answer. I know I do now at least.

"Can we see him? I want to see him. I want to see him now. I want Dad." My voice breaking as I could feel hot tears beginning to build up. I was working myself up into a panic.

My mother calmly removed her glasses, folding them neatly in her lap before she reached forward and caught my chin between her thumb and index finger. Tilting my head up, she demanded, "Look me in the eye." Her eyes had a dull reddish hue about them and her lips quivered ever so slightly before thinning into a tight frown.

"I need you to be calm. Are. You. Calm?"

There was a long silence that fell between us, interrupted only by the pathetic little hiccupping noises that continued to bubble out of me. Eventually, light-headed and embarrassed, I wiped my nose with my shirt sleeve and nodded.

"Your father is sick, he needs help." She tucked a stray hair back behind my ear. "He needs to rest, and when he's done resting he'll come home."

"Do you understand?"

I nodded again.

IV.

I spent a lot of time waiting it seemed, waiting for my heart to break and for the crying to start. Waiting for it to become real, waiting for the anger you're supposed to feel: the betrayal, the pain.

The young woman in the mirror stares back dry-eyed then looks at the far wall and waits. Wait.

Nothing comes.

Days later while outside with my godfather Tommy I came across a dead newborn baby bird. Its tiny wings splayed out, bathed in the red and deep golden light of the late afternoon.

Tommy glanced up, one hand cupped to shield his eyes from the sun as he squinted, and then pointed up into the branches, "Must have fallen."

It was an ugly little thing, mostly featherless, but staring at it I was left with a horrible lonely and unknowable feeling. Uneasy and petrified with the sudden realization of just what I was.

In that moment death made its subtle entrance. ●

Ode to Harry Kalas

Kelsey Romond

Course:
Introduction to Literature (ENG 150)

Professor:
Doris White, English

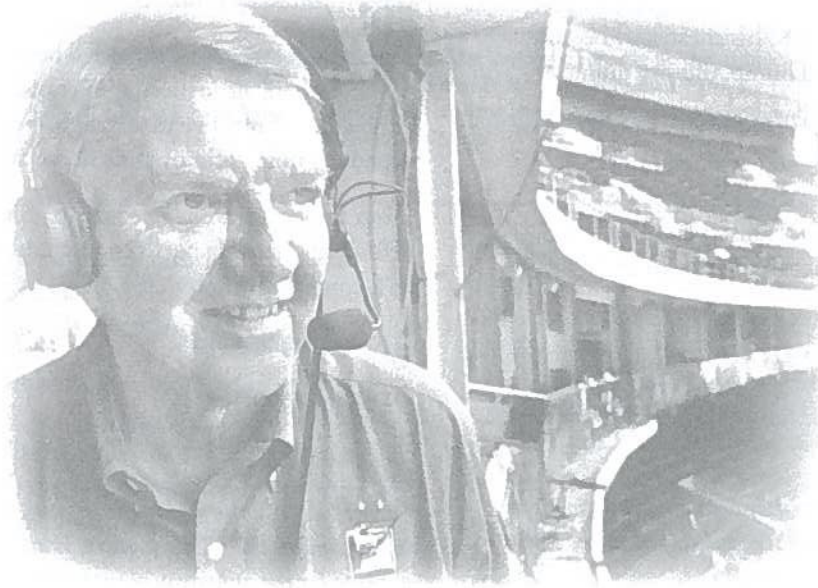
Student:
Kelsey Romond

Poem:
"Ode to Harry Kalas"

Assignment & Instructor's Comments:

As our class studied poetry, we also wrote our own poems. A particular favorite was the ode. We concentrated on the odes of Pablo Neruda and Gary Soto as we explored possible subjects, forms, word choices. My assignment was to pick a person, thing, experience worthy of praise: ode-worthy. Students chose family members, Blackberries, shoes. Kelsey chose Harry Kalas, the announcer for the Philadelphia Phillies. Although I had not heard Kalas announce (being a Met fan), I felt his voice in Kelsey's ode. In fact, I became emotional as Kalas's voice faded from Veterans Park and took its place among the stars. Kelsey described that transformation poignantly. "Ode to Harry Kalas" is lovely, and I have urged Kelsey to send it to The Phillies. I'm sure there's a place for it in one of their publications.

A city
Mourns in your loss,
Harry Kalas,
The man,
No myth,
Legend.
Your voice,
Fresh,
Exciting,
Cuts through
Speakers,
Radios,
And televisions.
In spring,
A reminder,
Baseball is here.
Philadelphia,
The United States,
Baseball country,
Hold your breath,
Because,
It,
Is,
"OUTTA HERE!"
No longer,
Will your voice
Be heard.



Like a harsh,
Unwanted,
Divorce.
A separation,
A void,
That no one
Can fill.
Yet,
Grass will
Still grow.
But not
As green.
And baseballs,
Will be

Hit,
Caught,
And thrown.
And the fans
Will come
To see their
Phillies.
Their
Red,
White,
And blue
Uniforms.
Colors,
Of our

Nation.
We honor
It,
As we,
The fans,
Will forever
Honor you.
You now,
Will announce
Amongst the stars.
Looking up
At the
Clear blue
Summer sky,
We thank you
As you guide
Our team
To victory.
Harry Kalas,
You,
Are,
The man.
So long
Good friend.
Philadelphia
Says goodnight.

Human Violence

Jonathan (Gi-Hyouk) Lee

**Course: Introduction to Anthropology
(ANTH 130)**

Professor: Catherine Just, Anthropology

Assignment:

Reaction Paper:

A Controversial Issue in Anthropology: This assignment should demonstrate your understanding of a controversial issue in Anthropology, your ability to appraise the arguments, assumptions and evidence that support clashing views, and to advocate for a particular viewpoint.

It requires that you read selections by Wrangham and Peterson (Yes side) and Sussman (No side) on a long-term anthropological debate, "Are humans inherently violent?" Read closely the excerpts provided and evaluate the soundness of each side of the argument. For example, you might ask:

- a) What assumptions guide each side? How reasonable are these assumptions?
- b) What evidence supports each view? How strong (complete, reliable) is the evidence provided?
- c) What are the major knowledge gaps/weaknesses of each argument?

Your paper will be evaluated using the following criteria. A score will be assigned to each criterion indicating the level of proficiency accomplished (5 will denote "exemplary accomplishment" and 1 will denote "low accomplishment").

Form:

1. The paper has a clear, well-defined structure (introduction, body, and conclusion)
2. The paper has a coherent, logical flow (separate paragraphs with opening sentences followed by details and examples; effective transitions between paragraphs)
3. The paper is well written (good sentence structure, no spelling or grammatical errors)
4. The paper includes quotations, citations and bibliographic references using the MLA style.

Content:

1. Identify the clashing views
2. Briefly describe the key arguments articulated by each side

Student: Jonathan (Gi-Hyouk) Lee

Research Essay: "Human Violence"

3. Compare and contrast the assumptions guiding each view and the quality of evidence
4. React to the debate, reflecting on the most striking weaknesses of each side in terms of knowledge, underlying assumptions and evidence.
5. Persuade the reader of the best response to this debate (support yes/no side or reject both)

Documents provided:

Endicott, K. and R. Weisch. 2005. Issue 2: "Are Humans Inherently Violent?" In *Taking Sides: Controversial Views on Controversial Issues in Anthropology*, edited by Endicott and Weisch. NY: McGraw-Hill

Sussman, R. No. "Exploring Our Basic Human Nature." In *Taking Sides: Controversial Views on Controversial Issues in Anthropology*, edited by Endicott and Weisch. NY: McGraw-Hill.

Wrangham, R. and D. Peterson. 2005. Yes. "Demonic Males: Apes and the Origins of Human Violence." In *Taking Sides: Controversial Views on Controversial Issues in Anthropology*, edited by Endicott and Weisch. NY: McGraw-Hill.

Instructor's Comments:

Writing backed by relevant examples is a hallmark of clear thinking. In his paper, Mr. Lee has gone well beyond the scope of the assignment to demonstrate his understanding of the topic. His essay does an excellent job of discussing the controversy surrounding the biological and cultural nature of violence. Mr. Lee's comparison of human and ant society is one example:

"By linking ourselves to ants on the basis that we both have the unique ability to wage war, can we look to ant biology and society to answer all of our questions concerning human violence?"

The Anthropology curriculum at William Paterson University encourages students to examine people, their cultures, and their behaviors from both the insider and the outsider perspectives and 'to think outside the box'. Mr. Lee has demonstrated this process by looking outside the 'primate box' with his inclusion of the entomological example.

The modern human race is roughly 200,000 years old by our latest estimates. Homo sapiens are the dominant animals on Earth, with a population of over 6.7 billion, and yet not a day goes by when there is no human on human violence. The reasons for human on human killing range from abstract concepts like nationalism, through personal vendettas, to simple, sadistic pleasure. Our world has been shaped by violence. The foundation and preservation of our country, the United States, were only possible through violence—we displaced the aboriginal people here to gain more territory, purchased the Western half from a desperate Napoleon financing his own war in Europe, and fought the Revolutionary War to gain independence from the British

Crown and the Civil War to maintain national unity. We gained the status of a superpower after the end of World War II, and then became the only superpower when the Soviet Union fell. Violence is a part of our culture and a cornerstone in our entertainment, where it serves as by far the most popular vehicle to drive the themes and inspirations of our films, books, paintings, music and video games.

Violence seems universal to the human race regardless of culture, but does this necessarily mean that the willingness to resort to violence is our genetic legacy? The ancient philosophical inquiry into whether ethical behavior is a natural knowledge or a nurtured one has now become a



source: <http://www.scienceinafrica.co.za>

biological question for Richard Wrangham and Dale Peterson, who claim that violence is an inheritance we received from our closest relatives, the chimpanzees. Supposedly, chimp males have been observed using violence to solve disputes and assert sexual dominance. However, Robert W. Sussman contends that this view was created simply to mesh with the traditional Judeo-Christian view that humans are born inherently sinful and therefore prone to violence. Sussman maintains that our closest primate relatives were actually docile, and points out the pacifist Semai of Malaysia as proof that the propensity for violence is determined by the culture rather than the genes. Both arguments have their merits, but both arguments are also flawed in their unwillingness to compromise, and so the best answer seems to lie somewhere in between.

In a small chimpanzee village named Kahama, a male named Humphrey wrestled and assaulted another male named Gobi. After hours of fighting, Humphrey emerged the victor, and Gobi lay heavily bruised and battered. Wrangham and Peterson point to this as evidence of our genetic predisposition to killing, but the circumstances of what warranted such a violent action were never explained. Furthermore, Sussman countered these arguments by referencing *The Chimpanzees of Gombe*, a book written by Jane Goodall discussing her time with the Gombe chimps, whom she called "far more peaceable than humans." In her findings only 10% of the attacks between chimps were considered violent, but this argument for chimp docility seems to defeat itself – although the violence may have been negligible (only 10%), violence still did occur, and the classification of what acts should be considered "violent" seems arbitrary since no explanation of what counts as "violent" was provided by Goodall. Furthermore, Sussman has cited studies of fossils and artifacts in the 1970s and 1980s that reveal "early

humans were not hunters, and that weapons were a later addition to the human repertoire" (1997:30). In fact, anthropologist Raymond Dart who declared that australopithecine were savage hunters (and therefore prone to violence against each other) was later debunked by the very fossils of violently killed australopithecines he based his claim upon, determined by C.K. Brain to have met their demise at the fangs of leopards rather than spears. Sussman also suggested that modern hunter-gatherers are peaceful, although he never offers an explanation of this.

We have reached an impasse. Both sides insist that their evidence is credible, but we are ultimately left to our own research to determine an answer. Wrangham and Peterson cited the Kahama incident, where Humphrey's attack on Gobi was obviously violent, but Gobi's death went unconfirmed. No information was revealed on why it happened or how the chimps reacted afterwards. Were the chimps unfazed or horrified? Was any pity given to Gobi or disgust directed towards Humphrey? We are never told. Sussman used Jane Goodall's observations of the Gombe chimps as proof of their docility, but what exactly passed for a violent act or a non-violent act was never discussed, and so it is impossible for us to know unless we were there to decide for ourselves. And if the nature of a hunter-gatherer is supposedly violent, Sussman asks why dancing is present in every human culture. This raises the possibility that dancing itself may be a natural manifestation of a peaceful disposition, but this presupposes that dancing is a gentle ritual, which is far from the case. Is the Cherokee war dance, used to excite and embolden bravery before battle, a celebration of passivity? Or what about Capoeira, a martial art begun by African slaves imported to Brazil, who disguised the fighting discipline as a dance to avoid suspicion from their Portuguese masters? None of these cultural protocols can be determined and judged so simply, and here we find the fatal flaw in both arguments.

It is ironic that anthropologists pride themselves on being part of a holistic science, but Wrangham & Peterson and Sussman have entrenched both of their arguments firmly in the behavior of apes. Looking solely at monkeys to see why we are violent is incredibly short-sighted and doomed to failure. The truth is what is consistent with all the facts. The truth should take into account all the evidence available, and not simply the behavior of apes, which are indeed very similar to us, but both sides seem to forget that apes are very different from us as well. Chimps may form life-long friendships, mourn their deceased, go through menopause, perform simple math, and care for their young like we do. But they do not dance, and they are also incapable of speech, abstract thought, reasoning, music, and going to war. Of the previous similarities between humans and chimps mentioned, we may be the only two mammals to have those characteristics, but the ability to go to war, perhaps the ultimate form of violence, is something we share exclusively with a species utterly alien to us – ants.

Ants have a regimented command structure. All ants serve the

Queen: the workers provide for the colony and the soldiers defend. Ants go to war, like most human societies, over the competition for resources in an area shared by an enemy colony. If the bounty is plentiful, there is peace. When sustenance begins to run dry, they will fight, and when they fight it is in formations and with complex strategies. Platoons of soldier ants will feint attacks to fool enemy soldiers into charging, then a second platoon will strike the enemy in a pincer attack to cut their support and destroy their formations. If a soldier ant gets injured during battle, there are designated ants that will drag them back to the safety of the colony—these are an exact parallel to the combat medics in our own militaries. There is a species of army ant made up entirely of soldiers and no workers, endowed with large bodies and enormous pincers unsuitable for anything but combat, and they survive by attacking other colonies for slaves that rear the army ants' children and gather food. In Greek antiquity, every Spartan male was a soldier by profession, unlike the other city-states whose soldiers were culled from sons of potters and blacksmiths. The majority of Sparta's population was made up of helots, or slaves, who worked as farmers, tutors, craftsmen, and laborers for their masters.

No apes display this sort of behavior. No gorillas have been observed routing an enemy formation by drawing them out into a line and then having allies collapse upon their sides in a pincer. No bonobos have been seen enslaving a rival group to gain their labor and service. No chimpanzees organize themselves into strict battlefield roles by designating soldiers and medics, and planning a course of escape to funnel out the injured. In some ways, ants are much more similar to us than apes are, but are we then to assume this similarity extends to the possibility of us having a shared lineage in hive minds, exoskeletons and antennas at some point in the past? We can link ourselves to ants because we both have the unique ability to wage war, but can we look to ant biology and society to answer all of our questions concerning human violence? The conflicting, unverifiable nature of the evidence presented to us by both sides, the simplistic approach and the adamant refusal of either side to find a holistic explanation, has driven me to consider a much more plausible answer.

The ability to perform violence is present in every human being – adult or child, male or female. However, the potential to be non-violent is there as well. Is it so outlandish to propose that if all human beings are capable of being both violent and docile, then it must be our nature to be both? Logically this must be so, or else we would have to be absolutely violent or absolutely docile. It is not in a chimpanzee's nature to read and write, and no amount of tutoring will enable one to do so. But every human child can learn how to read and write if they are educated early enough, because by their nature they all contain the capabilities of speech and writing. Violence or docility, just like any human behavior, can only be nurtured and manifested because they are also a part of our nature.

If it is our nature to be both violent and docile, this inevitably

begs the question of which disposition humans naturally tend towards. That would be violence. There is not a single culture among humans which does not contain a moral code, derived either from formal law or tradition, and its purpose is to control and curtail the use of violence to resolve disputes. Although the pacifistic Semai are often cited as an example arguing against the naturalness of human violence, the Semai maintain their society of pacifism because it is ENFORCED. Pacifism is not a naturally occurring phenomenon, because if it was there would be no rules needed to enforce its practice in the first place. There is a concept amongst the Semai called "Bood." When a Semai child is being coerced into doing something it does not wish to do, it can say "I Bood" to free itself from any further badgering from the parent, and the parent's demand must be dropped immediately. However, the concept of Bood exists because the natural tendency for a parent is to force a child, usually through violence. As mentioned before, if Bood was naturally occurring, there would be no need to enforce its sanctity. Also, every child in every society (including the Semai) must be tutored against being selfish, against throwing fits and using violence for personal gain.

Violent behavior can also be reactionary. Christianity and Buddhism were both religions that encouraged compassion and non-aggression. Jesus was the humble son of a carpenter born in a manger, far from what the Jews expected, who envisioned the Messiah as a vengeful, noble-blooded warrior-king that would free them from the tyranny of the Romans. Not only did this simple carpenter declare himself the Son of God and the promised Messiah, but he told the infuriated Pharisees that they should love their Roman oppressors rather than rise up against them. Gautama Siddhartha, the founder of Buddhism, was a sheltered, carefree prince who renounced his royalty after seeing the suffering of the world and preached that all people must free themselves from desire in order to achieve enlightenment, because desire was the source of all violence and pain. The tenets of these religions were reinterpreted as a self-defense mechanism in hostile societies. The sworn men of the barbarian lords who conquered chunks of the fallen Roman Empire mingled with the native Christian population. Soon these sworn men on horses took vows to both their liege and the Christian God, and were henceforth referred to as knights. Bodhidharma was a former member of the Kshatriya warrior caste in India who came to China to spread Zen Buddhism. When he happened upon a little temple called Shaolin, he noticed the monks there were in low health unsuitable for the rigors of monastic life, so he meditated in a cave for ten years and returned with scrolls filled with the first animal styles of Shaolin Kung fu. The story, of course, is an apocryphal myth, but it does not change the historical fact that Shaolin monks were to become hardened warriors. Both Christian and Buddhist monasteries were large, landed estates constantly in danger of attack from bandits and warlords during the tumultuous times of medieval Europe and the Three Kingdoms period in China. In both

cases, the monks had to reinterpret their religions to justify the use of violence in order to protect themselves from hostile invaders, or face extinction.

Primatology can give us some insight into our origins, but as anthropologists it is a mistake to believe it can provide a full answer. If the spirit of this science is the discovery of truth by ensuring all the available facts are consistent, then it is disconcerting that the very human-centric fields of sociology, psychology, child development and history were left out in this quest to discover our nature. If anthropology is the study of humanity, why are we seeking our answers in monkeys? As I have said, though primatology provides a part of the picture, ultimately apes are not humans. Can it account for our species being the only one to produce serial killers, who perform consistent, brutal acts of violence for a wide range of reasons? Some serial killers come from broken homes, but the vast majority of people raised with unforgiving lives do not turn into serial killers. Some serial killers come from fantastic homes and seem to live completely normal lives until they are caught, and the majority of children raised in happy homes go

on to make happy children of their own. What all serial killers share is the very human, complex thrill of taking the life of someone in his or her species with a total lack of empathy, which allows them to kill and torture their victims without any guilt or remorse. However, we also care for our elderly, infirm and injured. Skeletons of our prehistoric ancestors found in caves with missing limbs, have features that indicate extensive healing which could only be possible if they were cared and provided for. This compassion towards the weak is virtually non-existent in the rest of the animal kingdom. Sacrificing one's own life for the good of the many, like a soldier jumping over a grenade to protect his unit or a firefighter saving a family of complete strangers from a burning building, is an act of heroism restricted solely to our own race due our ability to create and understand abstract ideals like deep camaraderie and self-sacrifice.

The biggest pieces of the puzzle concerning our nature will be found not in distant relatives, but within ourselves, who, by our unique nature, are capable of both great kindness and great horror. ●

Sherman's World

James Budd

Course:
Introduction to Literature
(ENG 150)

Professor:
Leslie Rappaport, English

Student:
James Budd

Short Story:
"Sherman's World"

Assignment:

This assignment asked students to look at three pieces of writing across the literary genres of poetry and fiction, and then to write a creative piece of their own in which the characters discussed or grappled with the political, social, or cultural issues that linked the pieces they chose to work with.

Instructor's Comments:

After examining the greater meaning of the pieces he chose, James crafted this well written short story that clearly illustrates the issues the pieces confronted. Through his creativity and the careful use of humor and fantasy, James produced an excellent literary work, and one that provides a unique approach to literary interpretation.

We stepped out of the bar on the Spokane Indian Reservation and ran right into the sun. It hit our eyes straight on and would not stop. J.C. was prepared for this like she always was, one step ahead with her Ray-Bans on. I fumbled around for my shades, blinded by both the sun and the fog from playing cards for fifteen hours. I could have sworn it was dark when we went in, was it really fifteen hours? I was still fumbling when a car pulled up. It was a '65 Malibu, a little run down with no windshield, but definitely a classic.

"You call for a cab?" the Reservation Cab Driver said as he leaned over the seat.

"That's us," I replied, still looking for my glasses. Did I leave them inside?

I really was not sure what was going on at this point. I had asked the bartender to call me a cab. He said, "You're a cab" and reached for the phone. Indian humor I guess, or just bartender humor. I really wasn't sure, and at this point wasn't sure of much. I just went along for the ride.

J.C. climbed in the back and slid across the seat. I got in, closed the door, and looked at the driver. "We left our car down the road at the mechanic yesterday. How far is that?"

"About a six-pack and a half dozen smokes. Be there in no time." The Reservation Cab Driver put the car in gear. We proceeded out of the parking lot when a young girl, who looked to be around seventeen, jumped in front of the car and began waving her arms. She had long black hair down to the

middle of her back and could not have been more than five feet tall. At her size she was lucky the Reservation Cab Driver had even seen her, but he slammed on the brakes.

"You saw me, don't try to deny it! I need a ride." She held a twelve pack of Coors in front of her and a pack of Marlboro's. "I can pay the fare! Stop running away!" She jumped in the front seat and turned to look at us. "Sorry for holding you up, I just needed a ride and this son-of-a-bitch was going to take off."

"Not a problem," I said, leaning against the window. "No need for name calling though, it has been a long night."

"Sorry, I just get frustrated. I can't get these people to stop. My name is Leni Ann. My Indian name is too hard to pronounce and I don't like to use it so just call me Leni Ann." She flipped the cigarettes up onto the dashboard and looked at the Reservation Cab Driver. "Drive."

J.C. had her head back into her latest Clive Cussler thriller and was pretending she wasn't paying attention. She had been reading it most of the night while I was playing and was getting near the end. The girl had caught her eye, however, and wasn't about to let her go unnoticed. I was still looking for my sunglasses. Had I bet them and lost them in the game? I was playing in a strange land with what seemed like strange rules but I did not remember that.

"My name is Matt and this is J.C. We're just passing through. Always good to meet new people." I was about to let the glasses go. This day was just starting to be too bizarre. The girl had turned around and was looking at us with a smile. I smiled back. "Why don't you use your Indian name? I wasn't even sure you used Indian names anymore around here."

The Reservation Cab Driver gave a snort. Leni Ann smacked him in the arm and kept looking at us. "My father gave it to me to keep the boys away from me. He said I could change it when

I turned eighteen. Three months and ten days to go. Until then I just tell everyone to call me Leni Ann."

I looked out the window and could have sworn I saw a fish on the side of the road trying to get the attention of the Reservation Cab Driver. This was getting beyond weird. It was not too weird for him, however, since he pulled over. Leni Ann climbed in the back between us to make room for the fish. He appeared to be a salmon. She looked at both of us and smiled. "It is bad luck to not give a ride to him. I need all the luck I can get."

"She does," the Reservation Cab Driver said as he looked in the mirror. "Her father named her Three to Five with Good Behavior."

Leni Ann frowned. "And no one wants to say they got Three to Five with Good Behavior. It's not good karma"

The car slowed to a halt. I looked at the fish and figured, why not? "I can see why the boys leave you alone," I grinned at Leni Ann and looked back at the salmon. Turns out that was his name.

Salmon got into the front seat. I am not really sure how he opened the door. Probably used my sunglasses to do it. He placed four Lucky Strikes in the Reservation Cab Driver's cup and leaned back. "I will give you the beers when we get to the river. I wasn't able to carry them." He turned and looked at us, then at Leni Ann. "Hello folks, young lady. Sorry for the intrusion but I need to get back to the river."

"*No problemo*," Leni Ann said with a schoolgirl smile. I was figuring out quickly why her father gave her that name. J.C. thought the same thing. She turned her head and shot me a dirty look from behind her book. I tried to send back my innocent face but she wasn't buying it. I gave up and turned my attention to Salmon.

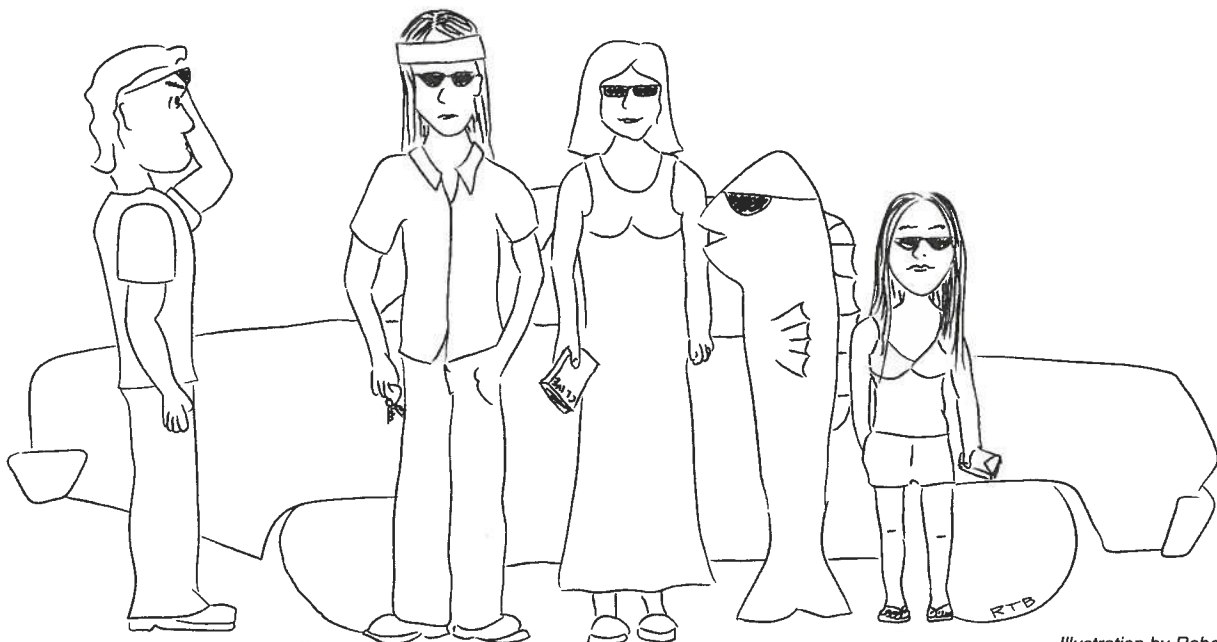


Illustration by Robert T. Budd

My mind was already shot so I had to ask. "So what are you doing out here? My basic biology class always told me you have to be in the water. What gives?" Curiosity had the best of me and probably even J.C., but she wasn't giving anyone the satisfaction of looking up from her book. I was stuck with the talking fish and the little girl.

"I was at a campfire last night. I had three stories to tell everyone. One to teach them how to pray, one to make them laugh for hours, and one to give people a reason to dance." Salmon leaned back in his seat. "It was a long night. Now I am headed back to the Columbia."

Leni Ann chirped up. "I love to dance. What did you tell them to make them dance?" She leaned forward into the front seat. Her name was more and more fitting. I could see her dancing all night. Problem was, Dad made sure she was dancing by herself.

"I told them of the stories of our ancestors. This used to be a great land. Before the white man came, before there was a Bureau of Indian Affairs, before diseases and everything else took the hope away from us, this was a great land. Close your eyes and imagine dreaming of this land. Imagine the sky a very dark blue during the day. No haze of smog from cars and factories spreading from the cities and the people coming out here to 'get away from it all.' The stars lit up the night sky as bright as the sun on some nights, not dimmed by the light pollution coming from people watching television. This was the land our ancestors hunted. We were not a poor people back then, we were a tribe that owned this land. There was no 'reservation,' there were just people living. Our people today have settled on what we have been given, but back then we enjoyed what we had. Green trees in a beautiful forest and a mighty blue river flowing with no dams in it and no pollution. Just a beautiful country. We ate off the land and prospered from it. And we celebrated all that we had, not settled for what we were given."

"Wow." Leni Ann leaned back in her seat. "I wish I had been there to see that. That would make me want to dance. Of course just about anything makes me want to dance so I am a bad judge."

Salmon turned back towards the front and sighed. "That's how far down we have come since those days." He looked out the front window and hung his head. "We have gone from a great people to a Don Henley song."

It took a lot for me to keep a straight face. This was definitely different from anything I had ever seen. Did J.C. have my sunglasses? Where the hell were they? I didn't know what to do so I stared out the window. Curiosity was eating at me though. I turned back towards Salmon. "How did you teach them to pray?"

Salmon turned towards us. "I told them the story of Jesus Christ's half-brother James. James spent the first several years of

his life not talking to anyone. An Indian man who did nothing but drink and play basketball raised him. He spent the first few years just staring into space. No matter what the man did, James said nothing. People thought that James had been through so much as a child, with his mother dying in a fire, having his head smashed in, and being raised by a drunken Indian, that he was never going to talk. After several years he did speak, but he only talked to the man. Everyone thought the man was crazy because no one can ever remember James talking or saying anything when anyone was around, but the man insisted. Finally, when James spoke, he told of what the Indians should be. He spoke of how we should take care of the land and that the land should take care of the people. Technology hated the land and the land hated technology, but they needed to work together. We need to take care of the earth because it is the only one we have and we shouldn't ruin it. The boy was a prophet and the people looked to him searching for wisdom."

There was not much more you could say to that so I kept my mouth shut. The Reservation Cab Driver had been facing straight ahead the whole time as if he was not paying attention. It seemed we were all waiting for Leni Ann to speak. Again she did not disappoint.

"I know James. He is such a cute little thing. I heard he was a prophet but I thought that was just a new way of saying he had a lot of money." She kept that schoolgirl grin on her face. "I will have to see this prophet thing for myself."

The Reservation Cab Driver pulled up to the garage. J.C. had heard his prices and tossed a new pack of Pall Mall's on the front seat. I gave him another ten to get some good beer and stepped out of the car. As J.C. was getting out she leaned back into the car and looked at Leni Ann. "It was definitely an experience getting to know you. This is ten minutes of my life I may never get back."

Leni Ann just smiled. I stepped out of the car and faced the sun. J.C. came around the car and took my shades off of my shirt collar. I slipped them on and began to see everything. The girl, Salmon, the Reservation Cab Driver, they all became clearer. I saw what Salmon was talking about. All of the Indians of past ages had gone and we were left on this barren land forgotten by everyone except the gamblers. The beauty was gone; all that was left was a run down garage and my car sitting in the shade.

I turned back to the car and looked at Salmon. "Just for my own curiosity, what is the story that made them laugh for hours?"

He looked at me as the Reservation Cab Driver put the car in gear. "This one, of course." He put on his own shades as the car pulled away.

J.C. looked at me and shrugged. "No wonder there is nothing left here." ●

Octet

Adam Cooper

Course:
General Chemistry I
(CHEM 160)

Professor:
Emmelina Stanescu, Chemistry

Student:
Adam Cooper

Allegory on the Periodic Table:
"Octet"

Assignment:

The requirement was to write a poem of at least four stanzas, or an allegory of at least half a page. The poem or allegory could depict any of the concepts covered during this semester of General Chemistry.

An allegory was defined as a pictorial device in which each literal character, object or event serves as a symbol illustrating an idea or principle (i.e., *The Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan). Students were offered the opportunity to present their work to the class, for everyone's enjoyment.

Instructor's Comments:

What can I say about Adam's little allegory when, I believe, it speaks for itself? I really appreciated his creative use of people and human emotions to depict the elements of the Periodic Table and to illustrate the principle of chemical bonding, through the elements' "desire" for stability and "nobility" (specifically, their desire to be like the noble gases of the last group of the Table). I read the piece several times and, with each additional reading, it became more fascinating. It was technically sound, yet highly imaginative. I found it equally haunting and brilliant! I trust the readers will, too.

Amidst a quieted hall of monoliths, Florent breathes and steadies himself. In this Periodic Hall, he is not alone in his pilgrimage. Acolytes from all regions of the table have sought the comfort of the five. In a single hushed word, he whispers "noble" and continues toward the great ones. So much has been said of these heroes. Out of the chaos of beginnings, they and only they achieved an eternal octet, giving them stability, strength, and invincibility.

Like so many before him, Florent has come to request a bonding. He is fortunate and doomed to be born of the Seventh Group. His tribe has violent ways. As rumored cousins of the Five, the Seventh Group nearly reached octet. In their affinity for it, they went down an evil road and resorted to stealing.

So Florent comes in prayer to the Five. He is the strongest warrior of his clan and, yes, even the strong pray. For many have been consumed in the bloodlust for an ionic bond. Lost in his feverish desires, he files past the prostrated supplicants.

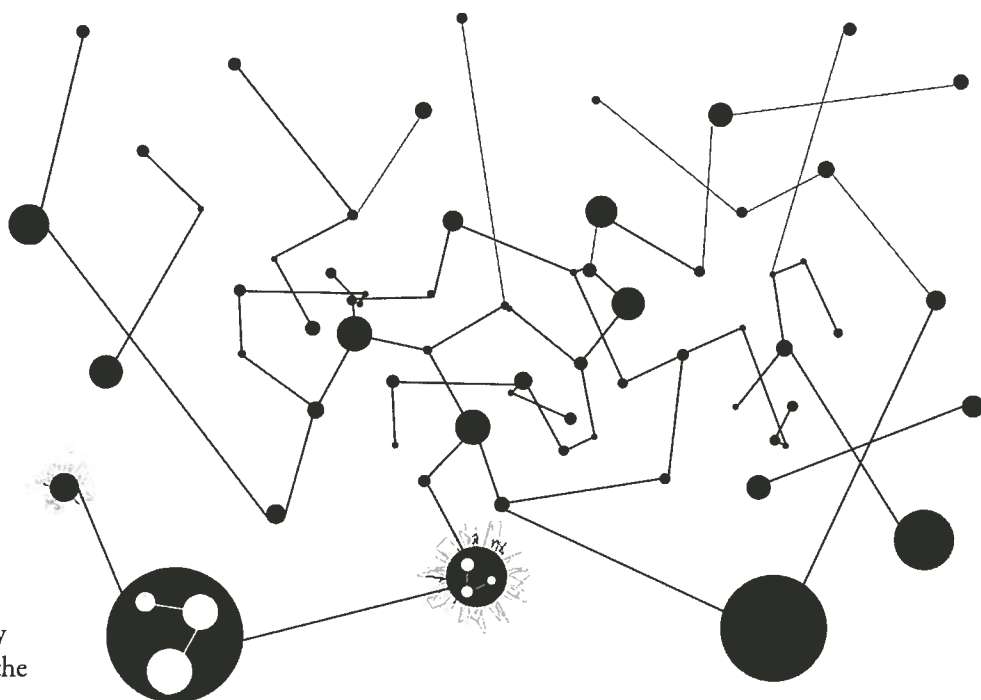
In the early morning dawn, Lith kneels low in humility and meekness. She scarcely notices the warrior. All of her life was spent to the Five. As a poor daughter of the First Group, she was taught sacrifice at an early age. She gave of herself, for according to the

teachings, octet could only be reached through such offerings.

The statues silently watch.

As Florent and Lith pray, the warmth of the rising sun lends them its light and heat. In a moment, her restraints loosen and a union between the two species is formed. They overlap, succumbing completely to the transformation. Their identities are lost to the entwining of their energies.

If it were even possible in such a place, quiet envelopes the room. To the astonishment of all, a sixth statue has appeared. ●



An Explanation of the Economic Stimulus

Brendan Quern

Course:
Macroeconomic Principles
(ECON 201)

Professor:
Martin Gritsch, Economics

Student:
Brendan Quern

Analytic Essay:
"An Explanation of the
Economic Stimulus"

Assignment:

Imagine that you take a trip to Europe over the summer. While traveling, you meet several college students who are very keen to learn about the United States. They are particularly interested in the current economic situation and would like to know whether the steps taken by the various federal government bodies are appropriate in improving the important macroeconomic outcomes of real GDP, unemployment, and inflation. Write a paper that you would read at a scholarly conference for students, where the audience is a group of your peers from Europe interested in learning about economics for the first time. You can, but do not have to, include a graphical explanation.

Throughout the paper, you need to state your assumptions, i.e., you need to make it clear on which macroeconomic model ("school of thought") you base your answers.

Guidelines:

While you are not limited to the following, at a minimum your paper must address:

- The projected impact of the current economic stimulus package ("American Recovery and Reinvestment Act") which includes an increase in government expenditures of \$499 billion and reductions in taxes on households and businesses of \$288 billion.
- A discussion of whether such large spending increases and tax reductions are appropriate actions given that they are financed by borrowing money.
- The projected impact of the Federal Reserve's monetary policy that recently lowered the target for the Federal Funds Rate to 0 – 0.25% (i.e., for practical purposes, the interest rate is as low as it can go).
- An evaluation of the increase in the FDIC coverage limit to \$250,000.
- A discussion of the "Buy American" provision in the "American Recovery and Reinvestment Act."

Instructor's Comments:

Brendan's assignment is very solid in addressing all the points mentioned in the assignment. He capably uses the tools we covered this past semester to explain the important aspects of the economic stimulus package. Additionally, Brendan did a very nice job in writing a narrative that wonderfully engages his imaginary audience.

Good Morning, my European Friends. I stand before you today with the intention of educating you about the economic activity currently taking place in the United States of America. I am sure that, through the news networks, you have all heard about the stimulus package that has been implemented in the American economy recently. We shall discuss this in full detail, but first we shall address the macroeconomic school of thought upon which it is based. I will teach you about the Federal Reserve and the FDIC, as well as various related economic concepts. Indeed, we are about to have a very economical discussion on a variety of topics. So let us begin.

The strategy of injecting money into the economy by way of a stimulus package is based on the economic theories of John Maynard Keynes. Prior to Keynes, the classical economists believed that supply would create its own demand and that recessions would naturally work themselves out because the price system would restore itself to full employment. This theory received a devastating blow with the advent of the

Great Depression in the 1930's. The markets were not curing themselves and supply was no longer creating demand. Thus, John Maynard Keynes proposed that the government needed to play an active role in the economy.

The essential concept of Keynesian economics centers on his theory of spending multiplication, which results from an increase in government expenditures. Before I lecture you about the spending multiplier, I feel that it is appropriate to go over Keynes's ideas regarding consumption, which he saw as the largest single component of a country's aggregate expenditures. The consumption function is an equation which states that disposable income is equal to consumption plus savings. If households choose to put a large proportion of their disposable income towards consumption, the spending multiplier effect within an economy will be more significant. If they choose to save the majority of their disposable income, then the effects of a stimulus package will be limited or perhaps non-existent. This rate of consumption within a country's economy is known as "the marginal

propensity to consume" or MPC. In terms of a graphical representation, it is defined as the change in consumption divided by the change in real disposable income. As I stated earlier, the marginal propensity to consume or MPC plays a crucial role in the effectiveness of a stimulus package.

Now let us get to the topic of the spending multiplier effect. If an economy is operating below full employment and real GDP is low, the government can choose to stimulate the economy by injecting money into it. For example, if government spending increased by one-trillion dollars per year, this would result in a vertical shift upward of the aggregate expenditures line. Reacting to the new one-trillion dollars of money within the economy, firms respond by increasing their inventories and increasing their output to adapt to the rise in demand. Then, based on the marginal propensity to consume, the new income accumulated by firms and workers is again redistributed throughout the economy. This spending-output-spending process will occur an infinite number of times until the economy reaches a new equilibrium point, with the desired result being an increase in GDP and a decrease in the unemployment levels.

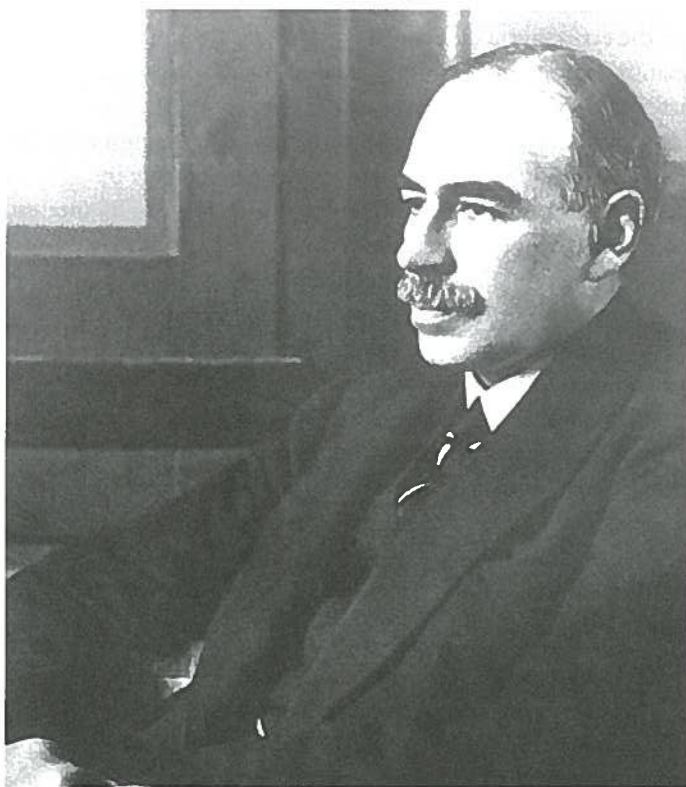
Let's now evaluate the impact of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which includes an increase in government expenditures of 499 billion dollars and reductions in taxes on households and businesses of 288 billion dollars. We will evaluate this under the assumption that the MPC is .54, because currently there is consumption within the economy but it is not at a high rate. To calculate the effect of a 499 billion dollar increase in government spending we multiply 499 by the spending multiplier which is $1/\text{mps}$ or $1/.46$. After completing the math we come to find that a 499 billion dollar increase in government expenditures will result in a 1.085 trillion dollar increase in real GDP. To calculate the effect of the 288 billion dollar tax reduction we multiply the tax reduction (-288 billion) by the tax multiplier which is equivalent to one minus the spending multiplier. After working this out, we discover that a 288 billion dollar tax reduction will create a 338 billion dollar increase in real GDP. Thus, the result of both the government expenditures and the tax reductions will create a 1.423 trillion dollar increase in real GDP.

Are these government expenditures and tax reductions appropriate actions given that they were financed by borrowing money? Let's find out. When one adds the 499 billion dollars of government spending to the 288 billion dollars of tax reductions, they find that the total amount of borrowed money is 787 billion dollars. When comparing this amount to the 1.423 trillion dollar increase in real GDP, it is obvious that the tax reductions and government expenditures were appropriate actions. They managed to repay the borrowed debt and also create an additional 636 billion dollar increase in real GDP. But let us not forget that these results are based on the marginal propensity to consume. Had

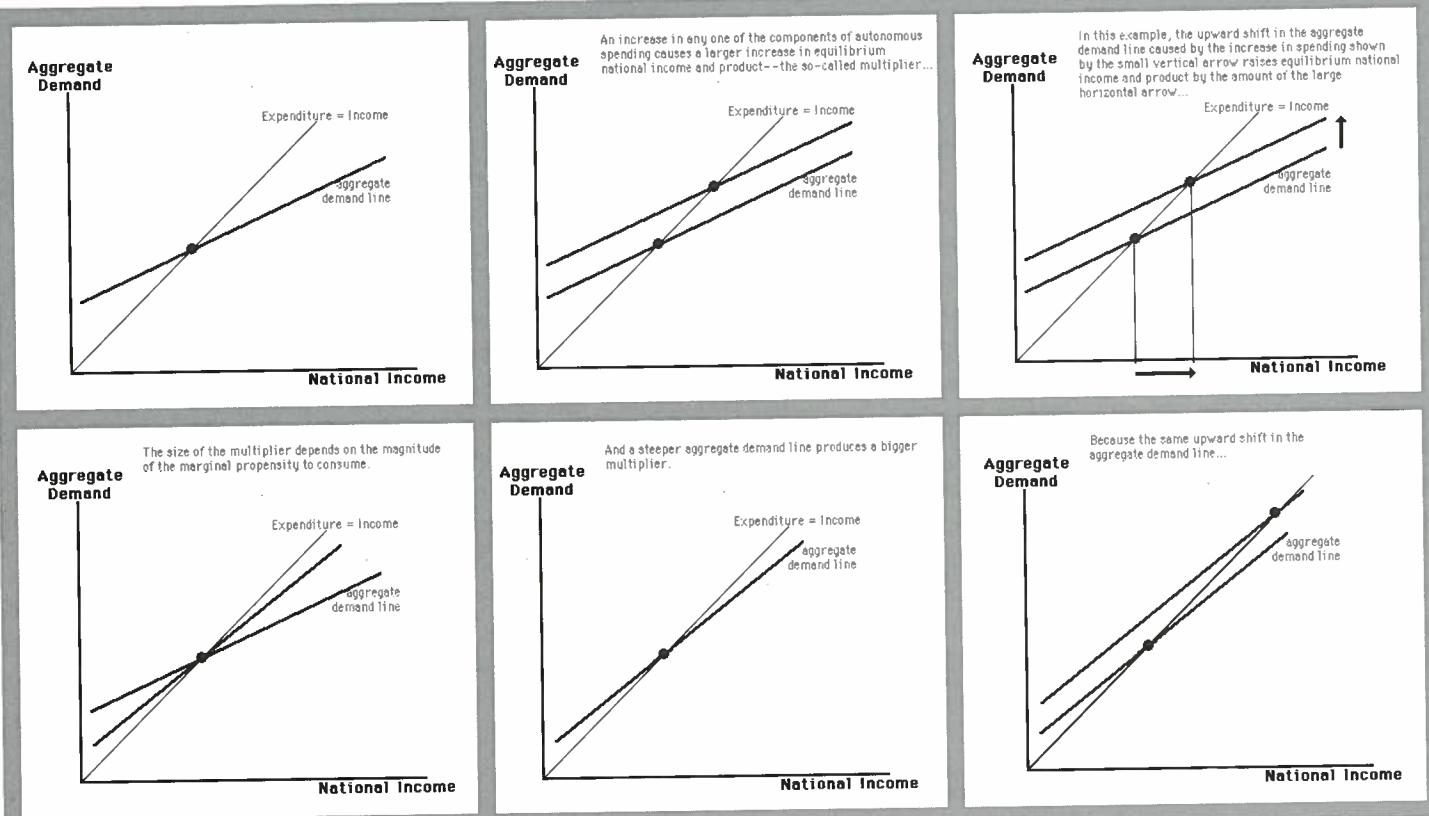
the MPC been much lower than the proposed .54 which we have used, perhaps we would be regarding these governmental actions as inappropriate.

Another aspect of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act is the "Buy American" provision that is included in the document. This provision focuses mainly on the purchasing of construction material manufactured within the United States. While the exact scope of the "Buy American" provision is unclear, it has garnered mixed opinions from businessmen and economists in terms of whether it will be beneficial to the American economy. Supporters of the "Buy American" provision feel that it will help the American economy by creating a circulation of money among American businesses. This practice of purchasing goods and materials that are only produced within one's home country is known as protectionism. Not surprisingly, many economists and business leaders feel that the "Buy American" provision is a poor strategy to boost the economy of the United States. Those opposing the provision feel that it will create major problems for the United States in the global economy. Economists feel that if the United States begins to limit its international trade, other countries will do the same and the result will be a global trade war. They view the provision as an example of short-term thinking, feeling that in the long run strong global trade alliances will benefit the United States more.

Thus far our discussion has focused primarily on the fiscal policies of the United States, fiscal policies of course being the economic policies carried out by both the President and



John Maynard Keynes
image: www.philadelphia-reflections.com



The Size of the Multiplier and the Marginal Propensity to Consume

image source: <http://econ161.berkeley.edu>

Congress. We now turn our attention to monetary policy within the United States, which is conducted by the Federal Reserve System. The Federal Reserve is comprised of twelve central banks that service banks and financial institutions within their twelve specific Federal Reserve districts. As with fiscal policy, monetary policy can have a substantial impact on the economy. The Federal Reserve has the ability to manipulate the money supply and in turn manipulate interest rates. If they choose to increase the money supply, interest rates will decrease. If they choose to decrease the money supply, interest rates will increase. The general rule in macroeconomics states that if there is a decrease in an interest rate, there will be an increase in the quantity of money demanded. Thus, if the Federal Reserve lowers the Federal Funds rate, which is the interest rate used between banks when loaning reserves, to 0-0.25% it will create an atmosphere of higher demand. Keynes illustrated how significant monetary policy is by way of a chain reaction. A change in monetary policy would result in a change in the money supply. This change in the money supply would in turn affect the interest rates which would then determine how strong business investment would be. The amount of investment would then affect aggregate demand which would finally result in changes in real GDP, prices and employment.

A major partner of the Federal Reserve System is the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation or the FDIC. This government agency was established in 1933 by Congress to insure bank deposits up to a certain limit. For a significant time period, the FDIC insured customers' deposits up to 100,000 dollars per account. Recently, in response to the economic recession and the fear of bank failures, the FDIC is now insuring customers' deposits up to 250,000 dollars per bank account. This increase by the FDIC will expire on December 31, 2009. This action by the FDIC was done to restore confidence in the public by helping to reassure individual depositors that their funds were safe. One could say that the raising of the FDIC coverage limit was done to stop a potential self-fulfilling prophecy where depositors withdrew their funds out of fear and actually caused the bank to fail.

I am sad to say, my European friends, that our discussion has reached its conclusion. What a journey it has been. We began with the fundamentals of Keynesian economics, progressed into fiscal policy and the "Buy American" provision, and wrapped up the lecture with the Federal Reserve System. I hope you will all retain the knowledge that I have orated this fine day. Let the light guide you my young European friends, the light...of economics. Thank you. ●

The Triangle Factory Fire: March 25, 1911

Alyssa Barbieri

Course:
**The West and the
World (HIST 102)**

Professor:
**Lucia McMahon,
History**

Student:
Alyssa Barbieri

Research Power-Point:
**"The Triangle Factory
Fire: March 25, 1911"**

Assignment:

For this assignment, students took a "virtual field trip" to a scholarly website covering the 1911 Triangle Factory Fire. After visiting this website, students were asked to prepare power-point "exhibits" that included at least 3-5 key images and 3-5 quotations from the various primary source materials available at this website. If students didn't have access to powerpoint, they could complete a word file using the required source materials. "Flashy presentation" was less important than content and skillful historical analysis. Details follow:

- 1) The assignment is designed to assess students' ability to analyze the significance of a specific theme/topic in history; to locate research materials using a scholarly website; and to present and interpret a variety of historical sources in an organized, effective
- 2) The presentation had to include a 1-2 page introduction/overview, a "tour guide" that would allow viewers to understand the historical significance of the event described, along with an analysis of the source materials you used to create your exhibit, as well as proper citations for all reference sources.
- 3) An assignment checklist had to be completed: items included
 - ___ I read the instructions carefully and made note of the requirements
 - My exhibit contains the following required primary sources:
 - ___ 3-5 primary source images
 - ___ 3-5 quotations from a variety of primary source documents (including both testimonials and newspaper/media coverage)
 - ___ I have clearly identified all sources and provided all references
 - ___ I have submitted a printout of my powerpoint exhibit.
 - ___ I have submitted an introduction/overview of my exhibit.
 - ___ All quoted materials appear in quotation marks and are cited properly.
 - ___ All of my quotations are identified and introduced properly.
 - ___ I have properly cited ALL referenced materials (quotations AND paraphrases).
 - ___ I have proofread my work for spelling, grammar, formatting, margins, etc.
 - ___ The work I have submitted is my own. I am aware of the Academic Integrity Policy at WPU and understand the penalties for plagiarism.
- 4) Self Assessment:
 - What do you feel is the strongest part(s) of your assignment? Why?
 - What do you feel is the weakest part(s)? If you had more time, what would you have worked on more? Why?

Instructor's Comments:

The power-point presentation that Alyssa prepared was a model of excellence—detailed, effective, and insightful. Alyssa's exhibit demonstrated a high level of historical interpretation and analysis. In addition to her well-chosen selection of images and quotations, Alyssa provided detailed comments that explained the significance of each of her source materials. The result was a compelling account that explained how individual lives were forever altered on account of this devastating fire.

The Triangle Factory Fire was one of the most devastating events to happen to New York City in 1911. More than 145 immigrant men women and children were killed because of poor working conditions. Industrialism was sweeping the nation and with that came the rise of sweatshops that made people work long hours 7 days a week for very little pay. They basically treated human beings like dogs. The conditions of the establishments were no better. They were poorly lit, overcrowded, filth infested, and had maybe one or two exits. The fire broke out one night before closing and the workers on the 8th-10th floors were trapped. Many on the 8th floor

fled down fire escapes and elevators, while the people on the 10th floor fled to the roof where people held ladders for them to escape to other rooftops. The people on the 9th floor were the unlucky ones: they were trapped in a locked room with fire all around them. They resorted to jumping from windows and fleeing down empty elevator shafts. It is hard to hear now that adding one more fire escape could have saved lives or that this could have all been avoided. As I was reading through this exhibit I thought about how people could have such a disregard for human life. This whole tragedy reminds me of a smaller scale 9/11 where people were

so desperate to get out they were jumping from windows so they would not burn to death. This was a horrible tragedy that will live within the survivors and anyone involved, and it could have been avoided. Greed and money drove these people to death because someone wanted to cut corners and not ensure their safety.

The Sweatshop: An unsafe workplace

In the early 1900's women were now in the workforce, but the conditions were less than ideal. You can see in the attached picture of the Triangle Factory that conditions in these small rooms were messy and unkempt. Women and children would sit at machines for 11 hours a day, with one half an hour break, for a dollar a day. Age was not a factor. The doors were locked and windows were their primary source of light. These horrendous conditions are the reason why so many men, women, and children lost their lives in the Triangle Factory Fire. (Cornell Exhibit, Sweatshops and Strikes 1911)



Photographer unknown

My First Job

by Rose Cohen

Rose was just a child when her father made her begin to work at the sweatshop. She worked for half of what adult women were paid and was worked harder than they were. She worked long hours and was harassed daily by her boss to work more efficiently. Attached is a quote showing her mentality; this portrays the experience of many women of their generation. Most immigrant women took jobs to gain money and start a life for themselves in the land of opportunity, but didn't expect to be run down to the bone. So they went to work and worked hard in fear of losing their jobs, and some like Rose wanted nothing more than to bring the rest of her family where she was. (Cornell Exhibit: The sweatshops)

"I myself did not want to leave the shop for fear of losing a day or even more perhaps in finding other work. To lose half a dollar meant that it would take so much longer before mother and the children would come. And now I wanted them more than ever before. I longed for my mother and a home where it would be light and warm and she would be waiting when we came from work."

The Fire: Pt 1

Top Photo:

Fire control was not capable of controlling the flames to save the people stuck on the 8th and 9th floors. Ladders only reached to the 6th, and the hoses took thirty minutes to reach the fire. There was one accessible fire escape, but with one of the exits locked and one blocked by fire women took drastic measures.



Lower Photo:

The destruction from the fire (lower photo) can show the struggle and fear that these employees must have felt trying to escape their fate. Exits were blocked by bulky furniture and equipment, which today would be considered a fire hazard.

(Cornell Exhibit: The Fire)



Photographers unknown

The Fire: Pt 2, The Locked Door

I felt that this image was very powerful. The artist's name is assumed to be Bert Utler. You can tell by his powerful drawing he was trying to reach the public and the owners of the Triangle Factory to inflict some kind of fear and shame for what they had allowed to happen. You can see in the drawing that the people are running and trying to break down the locked door in sheer terror. They had to have expected their fate with the fire blocking their other exits. You can see the flames engulfing their bodies as they try to save others and get out themselves. (Cornell Exhibit: The Fire)

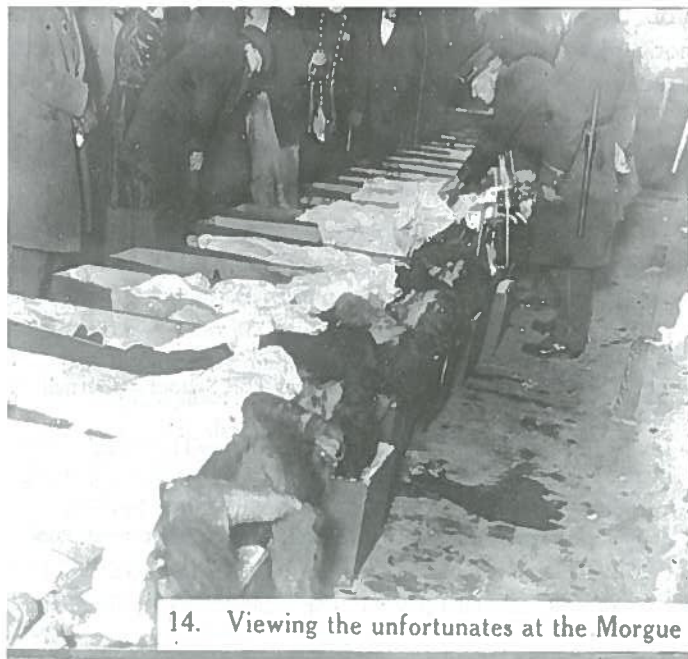


The aftermath of the fire left people in shock and terror. Survivors of the accident showed and would possess symptoms of what we call today, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. The attached quote was spoken by Rose Cohen, who after the fire made her way home sobbing, not comprehending the incident that just occurred. She would have nightmares of dying in that fire and was depressed and upset for the following days in light of her own life and the loss of her coworkers. I cannot even imagine going through an ordeal like that and just barely surviving. (Stein, *Nightmare of Survival*)

“I couldn't stop crying for hours, for days,” says Rose. “Afterwards, I used to dream I was falling from a window, screaming. I remember I would holler to my mother in the dark, waking everybody up, ‘Mama! I just jumped out of a window!’ Then I would start crying and I couldn't stop.”

The Casualties; Pictures at the morgue

People caught in the fire jumped out of 9th floor windows for lack of any other escape. Some tried to scale down the elevator cords, but plummeted to their demise. 140-150 immigrant workers died and many more were seriously injured. This picture is at the morgue the following day, where parents and relatives needed to go to claim their dead loved ones. The sight must have been so gruesome. You can see in this picture that many of these people look like children, so young of age. (Cornell Exhibit, Mourning and Protest)



14. Viewing the unfortunates at the Morgue

Protests

Top Photo:

In the following weeks people banded together regardless of their backgrounds. They wanted to see justice for their lost loved ones. Together, labor unions, religious communities, political groups and social reform organizations assembled to mourn those who lost their lives and demand real progress in worker protection.



Lower Photo:

The deceased were carried to their final resting place on flower filled carriages to the City's Evergreen Cemetery plot. Jewish, Catholic, and Episcopalian faiths were represented at the burials. The unidentified victims were buried as well with the tears of their whole community sending them off. You can see the support by how filled the streets were. (Cornell Exhibit: Mourning and Protests)



The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire Trial

by Doug Linder (2002)

Linder captured the mentality of a community when he wrote this piece on the trial. Not only was the factory at fault, but the community felt they had let the deceased down by not taking a stand sooner. No matter what race, gender, religious preference, or social standing the people banded together. They decided to turn things around and take a stand for the working class. They demanded to be treated like people and not workhorses. The Triangle fire set off a catalyst that started a time for change and that change was now. (Linder2)

"We all felt that we had been wrong, that something was wrong with that building which we had accepted or the tragedy never would have happened. Moved by this sense of stricken guilt, we banded ourselves together to find a way by law to prevent this kind of disaster...It was the beginning of a new and important drive to bring the humanities to the life of the brothers and sisters we all had in the working groups of these United States."

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Have You Been to Uncle's House?

Jenn Taylor

Course:

**Introduction to Literature
(ENG 150)**

Professor:

Leslie Rappalie, English

Student:

Jenn Taylor

Short Story/Analytic Essay:

"Have You Been to Uncle's House?"

Assignment:

This assignment asks you to look across genres, reaching beyond fiction, to see not only what makes a literary work effective, but also what it *means*. For this essay, you'll need to consider how pieces, across genres, can "be about" similar issues. Write a short story or mini-play where the characters you create (either from the pieces we've read, or ones you've imagined) discuss or grapple with the political, social, or cultural issues that link the pieces you're working with. Your story or play must include a mini-essay that clearly explains how your creative piece addresses the political, social or cultural issues of its literary sources.

Instructor's Comments:

In all of her writing submissions, Jenn displayed a beautiful ability to work with language. Not only is she able to fully understand the various complexities of a piece of literature, she can write about it in a clear and concise manner. This creative piece is outside the "traditional" bounds of literary analysis, but through her elegant writing, Jenn communicates the issues that the readings we worked with this semester conveyed.

Have you been to Uncle's house? Tall and imposing, it dominates the beautiful landscape with its stone authority, looking oddly out of place. I always told Julie that the land was too afraid to tell the house it didn't belong, forcing its will on the grounds, and Julie would throw her head back and laugh like Auntie May did when she told us stories. She liked the idea that the land was alive and lovely and that the house was alive, but was a stern, nasty sort of character. Well, anyhow, I'm sorry that you have to hear me tell you this story instead of Julie. She would have been much better at telling it. But you'll just have to make do with me because Julie won't tell it anymore. Julie can't tell it anymore.

Well, every summer Julie and I used to play all day at Uncle's house. If you asked me where his house was, I could not tell you very well, but Julie said Canada and Auntie May once said Nova Scotia or something. Oh, well, all I remember was it was a really long drive and Loren was always silent and Julie was always sleeping and I was nearly always cranky from sitting so long. But then the car would leave the highways and drive over the dirt roads in the early morning mist. I would always have just fallen asleep when the jolt of the dip in Uncle's road that Loren always forgot about would wake me and Julie up to see the early sun creeping through the trees. Then suddenly the trees would part and we would see Auntie May waving her apron at us, looking like a little speck next to Uncle's big house. Outside the car windows, the fields opened and there were flowers, flowers, flowers! Everywhere! Green fields and trees and bees would lure us from Loren's car onto Uncle's land to play for endless hours and when we tired, we would sit in the big oak tree. I would read *Anne of Green Gables* aloud and Julie would brush my hair until it shone. Oh! How I wished my hair were fiery red like my adventurous, feisty idol, Anne.

When the darkness crept up on our fun, we would curl up by the fire in Uncle's big library and listen to Auntie May tell wonderful stories full of mischief, her sea-green eyes sparkling with laughter. Everyone always said that Julie and I looked so much like her that they thought we were her daughters. Julie especially loved this idea because she always wanted to look just like her when she grew up. Auntie May was beautiful—long, raven-black hair cascaded freely down her back and over her willowy body, framing her high cheekbones and sharply contrasting her pale, glowing skin and those bright, green eyes. But the most beautiful thing about her was her melodious, Tinkerbell laughter and a constant, luminous smile that could take your breath away. I could never understand how she married Uncle, a silent, brooding man who was prone to violent outbursts.

But all that was before something terrible happened. The summer that Julie turned thirteen, I was nearly fifteen and, being ill-suited to raise children, Loren was in no mood to put up with our growing mischief. With each passing year, I could see more and more how much Loren despised and resented us, simply for being alive. After all, we weren't really her children anyways. She was only our stepmother who was forced to become our legal guardian when Father died. She shouldn't have minded too terribly though, since she got all of Father's money for taking care of us. Besides that, she made sure that she rarely had to see us during the school year since we were shipped off to boarding school every fall. As soon as school ended though, they had to send us back to her for the summer. From the first second we arrived, she was in a particular hurry to get rid of the two of us and prepared to drive us to Uncle's house that very same day. Julie and I didn't mind. Each summer, we were glad to be going to Uncle's as we realized that Auntie May was the single person who truly cared enough about us that she could see us as something more than merely a burden. So we eagerly climbed into the car

for that long, silent ride until Loren dropped us off at Uncle's and drove away as soon as we were out of the car without bothering to make sure we got in safely.

I notice right away that something is wrong. Auntie May doesn't come to greet us. Julie keeps insisting that she mustn't have heard the car coming and that we should look in the kitchen where she is most certainly baking bread for our arrival, wearing her favorite apron and listening to the radio, as she often did. But even now as we walk towards the house, I know that she won't be there. The spring colors seem duller and there is a terrifying stillness surrounding the house and even the birds know it and obey with their silence. All of the window shades are drawn, as they never have been before. As Julie pushes open the door to the house, I faintly hear a low, strangled cry, but Julie says it's only my imagination getting the better of me again. We search and search and search the house for Auntie May, but she is nowhere to be found.

Finally, Julie knocks softly on the door to Uncle's library where he is usually at his desk, spectacled and hunched, pouring over some book or another, the furrows in his forehead ever deepening. For some reason, I don't know why, I find myself asking Uncle where Auntie May is in a shaky whisper, lips pressed to the locked door. In a low, dreamy voice, he replies that she is on vacation for awhile and the housekeeper will take care of us and in the meanwhile to please not disturb him anymore.

Although I still feel a sense of dread, Julie seems perfectly content with Uncle's answer and manages to convince me to run about the house with her and play our childish games once more, even though our teachers say that we must be ladies now, and ladies don't play these silly games. Julie says bah! Forget them! School is over now, and it's time to have fun again, for one last time, at the very least. I reluctantly agree with her and we spend the next few days returning to the blissful naivety of childhood. That is, until ... until ...

Oh, dear! You must excuse me. My mind wanders sometimes. Forgive me. This part is especially difficult for me to tell and sometimes I just ramble and sometimes I go back in time and tell it and sometimes ... sometimes I can't tell it at all.

Now where was I? Ah, yes. Uncle. Four days after our arrival, he finally comes out of his study. Julie and I are playing in the basement. The basement. Where Uncle has just had a wine cellar built. Have you been to Uncle's house?

Building, building, building ... stone and wood and stairs. Old door. They say France, antique. Dark, dark cellar, for windows—light—would spoil the wine.

When the workmen leave...me and Julie, running down the stairs. Cold, through the old, creaky door. Julie says she likes it. Julie thinks it smells like grapes. Julie likes grapes. Julie laughs.

Cold, so cold! Julie wouldn't like it, this cold, this darkness holding her down. The fermented stench of decay increases through the heavy old door. Locked tight now. No windows. Cold stone. No escaping. Just cold.

Julie looked just like her. I look just like her. She who lies rotting

in this cellar. What did she do to anger him so?

Uncle's sneering voice in the wine, his leering face in the bottles. Where are you, Julie!? Julie? NO!

Cold. No laughing now. Julie won't tell the story. Julie can't anymore.

Have you been? To Uncle's house?

Oh! Gracious me! Would you look at the time! The nurse will be in any minute with my medicine. It was so good to finally have a visitor. No one comes to visit a dodderly, senile, old lady like me who rambles about silly things in the past. Well, thank you, my dear. You've been a wonderful listener, but I'm feeling rather tired at the moment. If you don't mind, I think I'll rest now. Julie wants to thank you for hearing her story. She is sad she couldn't tell you herself, but she can't anymore.

In my story, the two main characters, the narrator and her sister Julie, grapple with the realizations of the loss of blissful naivety upon growing up. The narrator also is faced with death and the reality of aging alone. The characters in "Ex-Basketball Player," "Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night," and "The Family of Little Feet" also face many of these same issues.

In "Ex-Basketball Player," the main character, Flick, used to be a star basketball player, but after high school he is stuck working at a gas station; only a hint of his former self remains: "Once in a while, as a gag, he dribbles an inner tube, but most of us remember anyway" (Updike 167). While on the high school basketball team, Flick is important and shows great promise for his future: "His hands were like wild birds" (Updike 167). However, "He never learned a trade" (Updike 167), so he is forced to adapt to the harsh reality of being an adult, supporting himself with a meager job. Like Flick, in my story the narrator and Julie begin to realize that their futures will not be nearly as glamorous as those of their storybook heroines.

Also, in "The Family of Little Feet" the three girls get a sobering glimpse of their future adult lives. At first, in a hurry to grow up, they try on their adult roles, portrayed by the shoes. However, they realize that in this strange new grown up world, their roles change drastically and they must face many new responsibilities. Frightened by their discovery, they ultimately decide that they are not ready for such roles, and discard the shoes. Likewise, in my story Julie and the narrator face rude awakenings to adult life in school, and they learn that the only person left who cares for them is dead.

In addition, the narrator in my story must face aging alone, since everyone she cared about is killed by her wicked uncle. This fact alone drives her to senility, as she seeks comfort in the recesses of her mind. In the same manner, people in "Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night" must also face aging and death, and they are petrified: "Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight / And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way, / Do not go gentle into that good night" (Thomas 194). Aging and death drive people to terror and madness, as they hide from the last beauty that life has to offer. ●

A Quintessential Conversational Controversy

Julie Minicozzi

Course:
Women's Changing Roles (WS 110)

Professor:
Tracy Francese, Women's Studies

Student:
Julie Minicozzi

Memoir:
"A Quintessential Conversational Controversy"

Assignment:

Each student will be required to write an introspective 5-page paper. The paper can be approached in a number of different ways.

1. You can choose a woman, or a group of women, and examine the roles these women have played and how those roles have impacted your life and/or the lives of others.
2. You can do a creative paper and take the images of women portrayed in movies, literary works, music, or other forms of media and do an in-depth comparison, contrast, and/or analysis of the character or roles chosen.
3. You can do a literary work of your own – write a short story focusing on gender roles, re-write a fairytale, or come up with your own idea for a unique paper of this sort.

Other ideas for papers may be presented for approval. Anyone choosing to do a research paper must pay attention to American Psychological Association (APA) format for citing and documenting sources

Instructor's Comments:

The paper that Julie turned in is beautifully crafted. Her use of language is witty and intelligent. Julie takes the word introspective to a level many students fall short of. She takes an issue that is used to define herself (and many others in society), and examines it in great detail. The paper allows the reader to connect with the writer because of the way Julie draws the reader in from the initial mundane question of "Do you have any children?" I think this paper succeeds in explaining to many who may not understand that there is an astronomical difference between being childless and being childfree by choice. It also opens up the idea of being able to define one's life by self standards rather than the standards of others.

"Do you have any children?"

This question is often used as a conversation starter and seems innocent enough, yet it is loaded with implications and the inquisitor is rarely satisfied with a simple "yes" or "no" response. An affirmative response typically encourages further prodding as to the number, ages, and sex of the children. A negative response often fosters a zealous probe into the future plans of the captive audience, a Guantanamo-style torturous inquisition as to motives and desires, and a stern rebuke if the answers presented are not satisfactory to the muckraker. As a woman who has chosen to marry and not have children of my own, this anything-but-simple question is the ultimate test of my capacity for grace under pressure.

I can remember as a teenager having many friends who baby-sat to make money or were forced by their parents to watch younger siblings. I was the third of four children in a relatively stable home, with non-divorced parents who never made us babysit each other. My parents rarely socialized so there really was no need for a sitter. We had a very small family and there were no child-age cousins. In fact, there were no children of any kind whom I was in contact with, other than seeing them in the supermarket.

I remember watching the *Miracle of Birth* video in health class and swearing that I'd never, ever go through that experience. I couldn't figure out why any woman would! Any time I'd see babies, there was no reaction: no "awww," no desire to hold them,

or worse, change their diapers, ugh. My sister was quite the opposite. She loved babies. She loved everything about them – the drool, the vomit, the crying, all of it. I didn't. I didn't want the pain of delivery, the constant care, the daily overwhelming responsibility, the eternal worry, and the inevitable departure of the child from my life (they do leave eventually). There was nothing about being a mother that appealed to me. I was pretty sure I'd never change my mind and that I should prepare whomever I was with romantically for the inevitability that I would remain childless forever.

I announced my feelings about procreation to my family toward the end of my teen years. My sister said I was crazy and that something must be wrong with me. My brothers and father just kind of shrugged – they didn't really think much about it. My mother, well, she was actually pretty understanding and kind. She said that when she was a teenager she felt the same way, but then, in her mid-twenties, she met my father and couldn't wait to have children. She said that a "biological switch" turned in her, which accounted for the four children in eight years they had together. She said that someday, probably in my mid-twenties, it would happen to me too, and that being a mother is the single best, most important experience of a woman's life. She insisted that one day I'd change my mind and that motherhood is the most significant contribution to society a woman can make; it's an exclusive right to women which should not be neglected, an opportunity not to be passed up.

As I entered my twenties, my desire for children still didn't manifest. In fact, I began to swing toward actually not liking children and disliking those who did. I can remember professing that there should be "adult" holiday shopping hours at the mall – a private shopping time for child-free adults who prefer their ankles unscathed by inconsiderate parents who carelessly maraud around with strollers. I wished for "adult-only" flights – I always seemed to be the passenger stuck with an obnoxious child seated behind me on its mother's lap, kicking my chair and crying for the duration of the flight. At the time, I had a steady boyfriend who had a very large family, with LOTS of children. The mothers were always trying to make me hold the kids, change them, and watch them so they could eat. It was absolute torture to me. I wished for non-children holidays, as if that was going to happen. I had countless conversations with people who couldn't believe that I was against having children. I was branded a freak, a crazy person.

Then the most amazing thing happened – my sister, my confidant and best friend in the world announced that she and her husband were going to have a baby! My mother was *devastated*. I know that sounds like an odd reaction, but she felt like my sister was sacrificing her dream of becoming a concert violinist. My mother had put my sister through Juilliard and Mannes music conservatories (bachelors & masters in music). With the baby on board, my mother feared that my sister would have to stay home and raise the baby while her husband advanced his career (that didn't happen by the way - my sister is now an extremely successful violinist). Not to mention, my mother said that *she* wasn't ready to be a grandmother. The funny thing was that I, who had been so very anti-children, was anything but devastated – I was so very happy for my sister, and in absolute awe of the entire nine-month process.

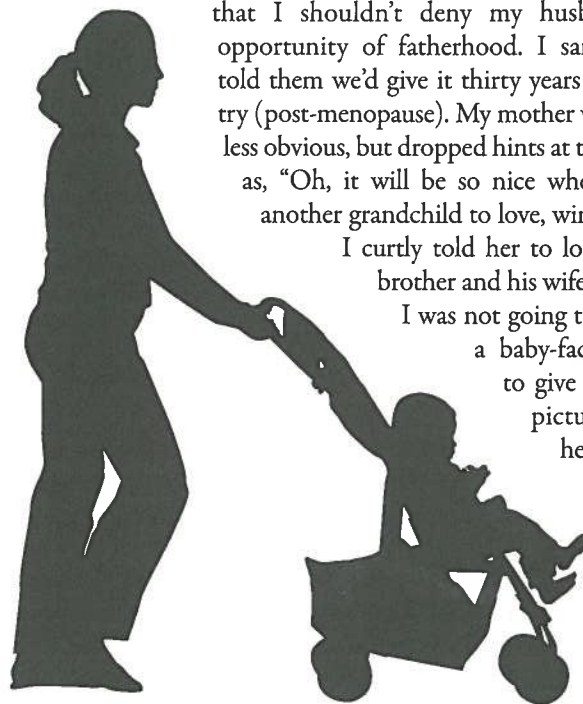
Before my sister was pregnant we used to joke that, for me, holding a baby was like holding a purse. When she got pregnant, I said it'd be like holding a Fendi bag: still a purse but way more special. When the baby was born, my brothers, mother, and I were at the hospital all night awaiting the arrival (my father had passed away a few years before). I saw the baby come out of the delivery room and I was instantly *in love* – she was absolutely precious. When I held her for the first time, I cried like a baby – she was the most beautiful little person I'd ever seen and we had an ineffable connection. My sister said, "A purse huh – I didn't think so." I saw my beautiful niece Cassandra nearly every day thereafter. I baby-sat her every chance I could, I changed diapers, fed her; she drooled and threw up on me, and I loved every ounce of her being. My family gave me the nickname "Mommy-Two," and I formed a bond that will never separate, with the most precious angel on the planet.

The down side, which should have been an upside, was that within a year of Cassandra's birth, my boyfriend and I got engaged. I was almost twenty-five years old and both of our families subtly began to drop hints that I should consider having a Cassandra of my own once we were married. Two weeks before the wedding, I told my fiancé that I just couldn't marry him. I told him that the pressure was too great, that I knew he wanted kids, and that I also knew *I never would*. With tears in his eyes,

he attempted to assuage my fears. He first tried my mother's strategy and said that I'd change my mind when the time came. He said he could wait, and that there was no rush – we were still young. That didn't work for me; I cried back, "What if I don't change my mind! I'll ruin your chances of becoming a father!" He paused in thought, and then told me the sweetest words; the words which really convinced me to marry him: "It's ok if we never have kids. As long as I have you, that's all I need." I married him two weeks later. The second the ink was dry on the marriage license, the pressure intensified.

Both of our families knew my position on having kids, and they were not happy about it. His father and step-mother said that we should give it a year and then try for a baby, and that I shouldn't deny my husband the opportunity of fatherhood. I sarcastically told them we'd give it thirty years and then try (post-menopause). My mother was much less obvious, but dropped hints at times such as, "Oh, it will be so nice when I have another grandchild to love, wink, wink."

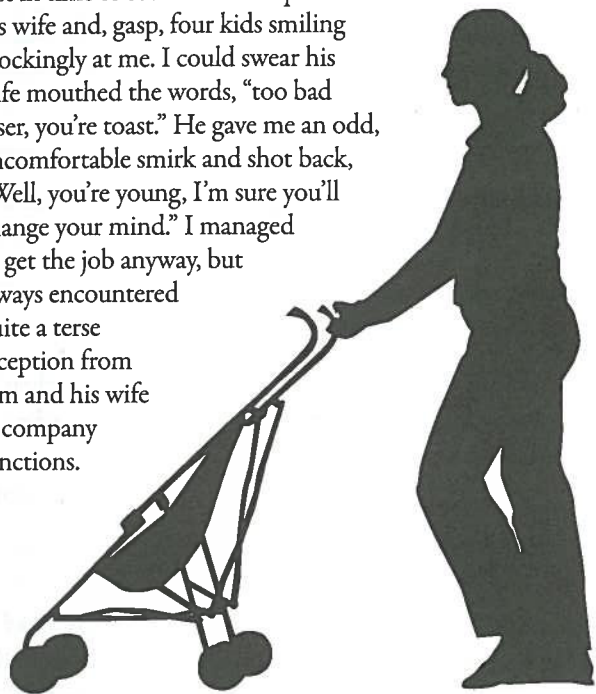
I curtly told her to look to my brother and his wife, and that I was not going to become a baby-factory just to give her more pictures for her wall at work.



Our friends were all itching to have kids and constantly asked when we'd "begin" our family. I scoffed, told them that we had begun our family (him and me) and didn't need more. The women we knew that were new mommies were relentless with their pressure and assumptions. They'd say things like, "You're probably worried about the pain of delivery, right? It's so wonderful – the pain is only for a day, then it's all joy!" As if physical pain was my only qualm. They'd say, "The best part is that you have this wonderful little person who looks just like you and your husband – you're bonded forever!" As if I couldn't possibly bond with my husband without a permanent token of flesh to cement the marriage.

Family and friends were bad enough, but the worst were the strangers who insisted on knowing every detail of this very personal decision. People I met at parties, friends of acquaintances, even strangers I happened to chat with, would all ask the children question, and then force a world of judgment on me that felt eerily similar to that of my family. The worst was when I interviewed for a job and the very intimidating manager sitting across the desk from me asked, "Do you have any kids?" My mind raced as to why he was asking – was he worried that if I

had children I'd call in sick often? Was he concerned that I'd get pregnant and usurp company resources on maternity leave? Was he just being nice and making conversation? I felt an unbearable heat rise up under my collar as I quietly said, "no," hoping that would end the conversation. He looked up, furrowed his brow and said, "Don't you want children?" Now my mind was really racing and panic was setting in. Why was he asking me this? Is he supposed to ask people these types of questions? All of the other questions seemed to be straight from an interview book, but this one was off the reservation. I decided to put the issue to rest and somewhat defiantly said, "No, I actually don't want children. My husband and I are happy and don't need that kind of validation." As the words escaped my mouth, I scanned the room behind him just in time to see the various pictures of his wife and, gasp, four kids smiling mockingly at me. I could swear his wife mouthed the words, "too bad loser, you're toast." He gave me an odd, uncomfortable smirk and shot back, "Well, you're young, I'm sure you'll change your mind." I managed to get the job anyway, but always encountered quite a terse reception from him and his wife at company functions.



After a couple of years of marriage, the tension with my husband over the issue of having children, coupled with many other factors involving his family, put us firmly at odds. We finally called it quits and decided to move on and find people better suited to our needs, hopes and desires. We parted as friends, and he is now re-married and a proud father of a daughter.

I managed to meet someone who I absolutely adore and love dearly. I married a man who I consider my perfect match. We're business associates and work together in the same office. We are also intellectual equals and partners in every way. We share a love for music, travel, cooking, and more. He has four, yes four, children of his own – all girls, all wonderful, sweet young ladies. I've been with him for over six years and have helped him raise his beautiful girls. He was divorced long before I entered the picture and we are on friendly terms with his ex-wife. She lives a mile from us, and we share the parenting of his eighteen year old and three sixteen year olds – yes, they're triplets. Oh yeah, he's also nearly sixteen years older than I, has no desire for more children, and is cognizant of and comfortable with my child-free decision.

When I told my mother and sister that he and I would not be

having children together, they were both very upset. My mother said that I was making a monumental mistake, that I was robbing myself of motherhood, robbing her of grandmother-hood, and that I'd regret not being able to contribute to society through my own children. My sister said that she'd witnessed the love I'd shown Cassandra all of these years and could tell that I have the capacity to love a child. She felt most disappointed that she wouldn't have the opportunity to love a niece or nephew of mine in the same way that I'd loved her daughter. Both asked how I could throw away my *one* precious gift of womanhood.

I took their comments to heart and asked myself several questions: Was I cheating myself? Was I cheating society? Was I throwing away my special right as a woman to change the world through my own child? Would I regret my decision? Would I ever be able to make a contribution to society without having my own children? The answers are not hard and fast, and not what most want to hear: I don't think so, probably not, maybe, maybe and I think so. I realized that at the age of thirty-four, I don't have all of the answers, but I do know that I've made my decision, which was always the same decision and hasn't changed thus far.

What I have learned over the years is that I'm a great Aunt. I unconditionally love and care for my nieces and nephews (yes, my mother was blessed with other grandchildren), without having to discipline or parent them. I am a *fantastic step-mother*. I love my step daughters unconditionally and I nurture them maternally. I cook for them, hold their hands, walk arm in arm through the mall, hug them when they're hurt or broken-hearted, kiss their boo-boos, and lend my ear when they need to talk. I am a guiding, concerned, loving friend to them, I support and enforce both of their parents' wishes, and the girls love me for it. I contribute to society by being a conscientious person, a loving spouse and step-mother, aunt, sister, sister-in-law, daughter-in-law and daughter. I donate my time and money to charities, and I help others through my church and Rotary Club.

I no longer wish for stroller-free shopping days, although I do still secretly wish for child-free flights. I'm sorry, I just hate when that kid kicks my chair for six hours! People never cease to pry into my life and ask me the inevitable children question, but because I'm now very comfortable in my relationship with my husband, I'm no longer as sensitive when confronted with the inquisition.

I avoid asking people if they have children because I recognize that it could open up a Pandora's box of hurt (such as if they had a miscarriage or are reproductively challenged), it could incite an hour-long dissertation on how the world is over-populated, or it could encourage a litany of pictures and stories about poopie diapers, which is something I do not wish to endure. I believe that the very personal question, "Do you have children?" deserves a re-write. I think that if people really want to get to know someone, they should ask, "Do you want to talk about your current health issues, morals, beliefs, hopes, fears, politics, religion, familial status, or social status? Or can we just chat about the weather and call it a night?" Now that's a real conversation starter! ●

Unassuming Hero

Nicholas Dimichino

Course:
Communication Capstone (Comm 445)

Professor: Tina Lesher, Communication

Student: Nicholas Dimichino

Oral History: "Unassuming Hero"

Assignment and Instructor's Comments:

Nick's extraordinary interview with a 9/11 survivor was written for my capstone class for journalism/PR majors. I hesitated initially to accept his proposal to do this story because it mirrors the type of assignments I give in Advanced Reporting classes; capstone projects usually encompass research projects or extensive work like putting out a brochure or magazine with many articles. But Advanced Reporting had not been put on the schedule for a year, and I thought the proposal was solid. The result proved to be a superb piece that certainly is worthy of publication. It reinforces my argument that our students truly are capable writers, reporters and editors.

It was 5:30 a.m. The sun had yet to rise on what would be a beautiful, cloudless September day in the Northeast. Dennis Tardio, FDNY Captain, Engine 7, was just beginning his day, as he climbed into his car and started on his way to the firehouse.

Arriving around 7 a.m., Tardio truly christened the morning as he settled down with his customary cup of coffee and Daily News. It was his life as a fireman, something he loved more than anything else in the world. Then 48, he had served for the FDNY for 22 years.

"It's the greatest job in the world," said Tardio. "You know—it's got everything you could ever want. It's rewarding in so many ways. What else could you ask for in life?"

By 8:15 a.m., although their shift didn't begin until 9, most of the firefighters that would be on for the day had already arrived. As the morning guys cooked breakfast, most of the firemen that worked the night before were heading home.

It was just another day at the firehouse.

Said Tardio, "You *have* to go to work, right? Do you want to go to work and do something you don't enjoy doing for your whole life? I never felt like I went to work. I'd say to my wife 'Okay, I'm leaving—I'm going to the firehouse.' It never felt like work."

As he finished up his coffee and read about the Yankees' 13-game division lead and sweep of the Red Sox, everything seemed perfect. Everything was perfect.

Little did he know, his morning—and his life—were going to change in perhaps the most traumatic way imaginable.

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Tardio, a good-natured, unassuming man, was born Dec. 5, 1952, in Manhattan. He moved to Staten Island when he was

7 years old, living there until he met and married his wife, Lorraine, in 1978. He joined the FDNY one year later.

Lorraine grew up in Queens and admits early anxiety about her new husband joining the fire department.

"In the beginning, [I was nervous]," said Lorraine. "But then you get to the point where you're like 'Okay, this is what he does—this is who he is.'"

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Shortly after 8:30 a.m., a call came in to the firehouse.

"The call was at Lispenard and Church, an odor of gas," said Tardio. "So we responded, arrived in minutes. We had nobody extra riding with us. It was just the chauffeur, myself, our nozzle man, our backup man, and our control man. Five guys, that's it."

There were 25 guys that made up his company. Thirteen of them were on duty the morning of the gas leak.

Tardio and his men boarded their rig, and headed out, reporting to the site around 8:43 a.m. Nothing out of the ordinary.

"We had our normal complement of firefighters," said Tardio. "We went out the door, and went to the gas leak. Routine."

Chief Joseph Pfeifer, of Battalion One, followed Tardio and his men to the corner of Lispenard and Church to assist with the reported leak. Pfeifer had been the Battalion Chief in Lower Manhattan for five years. He was leading the proceedings, using a gas meter to help him detect any odor.

The gas meter is a small device with a hose-like neck that buzzes, indicating the presence of gas. He used this around the area, trying to determine if there was gas coming from a sewer grate in the street.

The gas meter began to buzz slightly, but it was mere background noise to a more thunderous, blaring sound.

Neither Tardio nor anyone else knew that by the time they got the call at the firehouse for a smell of odor at Lispenard and Church, two commercial airplanes had already been hijacked, and were each heading for Manhattan.

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As Tardio and the other members of the FDNY stopped what they were doing for a second to investigate the booming sound coming from the sky, they looked up and couldn't believe what they saw: A plane flying over Lower Manhattan.

Said Tardio, "I was actually standing there, and you saw the plane flying low. For like three seconds, I'm saying 'Turn, turn! Where's this guy going?' Then boom! He hit."

American Airlines Flight 11 flew over Manhattan and slammed into the northern façade of the World Trade Center's North Tower.

The sound echoed through the city as a massive explosion shot out from the Tower, spraying fire and debris to the ground below.

Engine 7 up until this point was investigating a gas leak. It now knew its assignment of a measly gas leak had just drastically changed.

Chief Pfeifer and the rest of Engine 7, Ladder 1, left the gas leak and immediately headed for the World Trade Center. On their way, Pfeifer reported the incident, as they were among a small group of people who had actually seen the plane hit.

In the truck on the way to the Trade Center, the men were buzzing about what had just happened.

Said Tardio, "You basically looked at it and said 'Okay, we've got 10, 20 stories of fire. We'll deal with it, well get up there. You know, we'll—we'll get to it.'"

Lispenard and Church, the site of the gas leak, was only 13 blocks from the Towers, with a clear line of sight. It only took a minute or two for Engine 7 to respond.

On the way to the Towers, Chief Pfeifer called in and set up the staging area at Vessey and West Street, outside the lobby of the North Tower. The Chief also called for a third alarm before the men even got to the building.

"This is the 'big one,' as we say in the fire department," said Tardio. "The big one, this is the big fire. Fifth alarm, sixth alarm, that's a big fire. This wasn't a one-room apartment, or a private dwelling—this is the big one. But you know, we responded and upon arrival, we're looking up trying to figure out how high it is."

When Engine 7 arrived, they gathered at the staging area in the front of the building and collected their gear. The men tried to prepare themselves best they could to fight what was already one of the most challenging fires any of them had ever seen, just from the sheer height of it—over 80 stories up. Tardio and his men knew what had to be done.

"We pulled around in front of the building, we took our position," said Tardio. "We had to feed the standpipe system, which would give us water. So I told the chauffeur to hook it up, and I grabbed an extra length of hose to carry—which wasn't my assignment, but knowing that every floor was an acre—and a length of hose is only 50 feet—I figured 'All right let's take another length of hose, just in case.'"

Tardio and the rest of his crew readied themselves with tools and supplies, and entered the building.

"On the way in, there's a vestibule between the front doors and the interior doors," said Tardio. "There were two people right there on fire. There was a man and a woman. I think the man—he was gone. The woman was actually moaning—her clothes were on fire."

"The [probationary firefighter] I was with asked 'Should I put her out?' I thought that was a very weird question, but I said 'Yeah, put her out.' I don't think she lived, but, we—we put her out."

Tardio immediately thought to himself, "*This is something no one should ever have to see.*"

As the men entered the lobby of the North Tower, Chief Pfeifer was immediately met with all the information known at the time.

"Whenever we go into a high-rise like that, we report to a command post," said Tardio. "Every building over 10 stories has a fire safety director. And it's his job to meet us and let us know what's going on."

The fire safety director met the Chief, and told him the fire was somewhere above the 80th floor. The firefighters found it hard to believe him, as someone mentioned that it looked as if the plane hit the lobby.

"All the glass was blown out of the windows," said Tardio. All the thick marble on the walls was off. It looked like the plane hit the lobby."

The firefighters did all they could when they first got there, trying to get the elevators to come down so they could make their way to the fire. Nothing was working like it was supposed to.

Said Tardio, "One of the first things I did was try to find an elevator. We have what's called a 16/20 key that we use, and it will recall all the elevators; it will make them automatically come down. Nothing was responding, nothing was coming

down. I checked another bank of elevators and the doors were actually blown off.

"I figured the plane hit, the fire came down, blew off the elevator doors, and that's how the two people got burned. So it must have been when it hit, the fuel came right down, blew off the doors and torched those two people."

The scene was chaotic at best; people were running and screaming, trying to escape. But the firemen kept their cool, knowing they had to go fight a fire.

"Just another fire," they told themselves.

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Said Tardio, "When we couldn't get any of the elevators, I reported back to the Chief and I said 'Chief, we're going to start up.' And he said to team up. We teamed up with Ladder 8."

The firefighters of Engine 7 got to the site first because they were already out on a call, reporting to the gas leak a mere dozen or so blocks away. Once they got there, Tardio knew what had to be done; it was just a matter of getting to the fire and doing it.

"Chief Pfeifer immediately gave the report back; we knew what we had."

Eleven men from Engine 7 and Ladder 8 teamed up and headed for the stairs, knowing they had to go up roughly 80 flights to get there. This wasn't going to be an easy task, but the men never stopped to think about that. They were trained heroes, trained heroes carrying nearly 100 pounds of equipment up 80 flights of stairs.

"When we started up, I was carrying a length of hose. I'm not a big person; I think at the time I weighed 170 pounds. The length of hose is 50 pounds, the mask is 24 pounds, so with everything else, maybe I'm carrying 100 pounds."

"I knew we had to get up to help people; we had to get up there. I knew we'd get there—but it was just going to take awhile."

Some men carried hose; some carried other tools like an ax, pry bar or a ceiling hook; some carried a fire extinguisher and a ceiling hook. Everyone had tanks on their back.

Tardio didn't make it far up the stairs before he got an advanced viewing of what was 80 floors higher.

"As we're going up, we didn't even make it to the 5th or 6th floor and people were coming down burned, you know—with burns on their arms. Their skin was starting to peel off. So we thought maybe there was fire below too, because there's no way these people made it from the top floors already."

"So as we're going up, we're asking people what floors they were coming from, if there's fire on any of the floors, because you don't want to pass fire. So if there was fire on the tenth floor, we would stop and put out the fire."

Tardio and his men put out small fires as they went up the stairs of the North Tower, through a stairway that was not made for heavy traffic.

"There was room enough for us to go up and them to come down, single-file, that's it."

With all the equipment each man had to carry and all the stairs they had to go up just to get to the fire, let alone fight it, it was hot, very cramped, and an absolute recipe for disaster.

"I knew we were going to be in trouble because as we're going up, we're already hearing maydays for firemen down, guys were starting to experience chest pains already and we had a 70-story climb still ahead of us. So I thought right away 'Okay, this isn't going to be a good day for us.'"

After awhile, they needed to take a break from the climb, as they were already drenched in sweat and absolutely exhausted.

"I think we got maybe to the eleventh or twelfth floor the first time before we said we had to take a break. You know, your heart is going BOOM! BOOM! BOOM! The adrenaline is pumping, it was tiring."

As they were taking a quick break, Tardio had a thought come to his mind that very well may have saved the lives of many of the men he was with.

"I said to the Lieutenant from Ladder 8 'We have to stay together, because if the shit hits the fan, and we have to leave, I don't want to have to look for anybody. We might not have that kind of time. If we have to get out, we better all be together, so we can get out.'"

"We started up again, and people were still coming down. And as we're going up, we're looking in floors, to see if anyone is burned and may need help getting out. It's not a straight climb for us, we're not just going straight up."

A little while later, around the 25th floor, the time was creeping up on 9:59 a.m. At this point, the men inside the North Tower had no idea the South Tower had already been hit by a plane.

"About the 25th floor, the building starts to shake. This is a 110-story high-rise building, and it's starting to shake. We all said let's get into the stairwell for some reason. We all felt that would be a safer place to be. Not knowing at the time that the shaking was the South Tower coming down."

The South Tower of the World Trade Center collapsed at 9:59 a.m. into nothing but a huge pile of steel and dust,

covering everything for blocks. Thousands were already dead, and everyone knew September 11 was a day that no one would ever forget.

The entire world watched the South Tower come crashing to the ground on live television. It was the kind of thing you could only imagine seeing in the movies, with some special effects. This was the most awesome sight anyone had ever seen.

When Flight 175 hit the South Tower at 9:03 a.m., it hit much lower than when Flight 11 hit the North Tower. Many credit this as the reason it collapsed first, despite being hit second.

At 9:03, Tardio was already beginning to go up the stairs of One World Trade Center, not knowing anything that was going on outside those walls until the tenth floor, when one of his men ran to a window while they were taking a break and reported back that they hit the South Tower too.

"The stairwell doesn't have windows," said Tardio. "So we didn't know until that point. At first, I said 'All right, a plane hit the Trade Center,' you know, terrorism never really entered my mind. Shit happens. But when the South Tower was hit, I said 'This is an attack, this is no accident.' As much as you don't want to believe it—yeah—this is a terrorist attack.

"Now things start going through your mind, like 'Okay, is there another plane coming? Is this just the start? Are there explosives in the basement like in '93?'

"I don't know if maybe you want to call it stupidity on our part, or just blind dedication, but after the building shook, we regrouped, and kept going up."

Amid all of the chaos, the men still weren't anywhere near the fire. They knew they had to get up to help people. They had to get up there.

They heard over the radios that there was a secondary collapse around the 60th floor. Tardio assumed at the time that was what caused the building to shake. The radio call about the collapse also told them that someone got as high as the 60th floor.

"Firemen made it higher than we did, definitely," said Tardio. "Others were passing us as we stopped in on each floor to help people, they may have even found an elevator that worked as they went up."

It is next to impossible to communicate via radio in high-rise buildings. After the South Tower collapsed, the evacuation order that went out over the airwaves for the FDNY was not heard by Tardio and his crew, so they kept going up, making it about five floors higher. They were taking another break, and were met by another Chief.

Said Tardio, "We made it to the 31st floor, and we had to take another blow. It's a tough climb—and I thought I was in shape. Still carrying 100 pounds, now I'm dripping wet, nothing is dry, and we're taking another blow. The Chief is coming down and he sees us. Every floor he's going down, he's making sure he tells everyone.

"He says 'All right, guys, we're getting out.' After 22 years on the job, I know enough that when the Chief says we're getting out, I don't ask why. I said 'All right, the Chief says we're getting out, we're getting out.' He obviously sees something that we don't.

"So I dropped the hose, left the hose, said screw it—we're getting out, I won't need it. So we start going down and it was an orderly descent. Nobody was pushing, at that point, the floors below us were evacuated, nobody was left."

Tardio started down the stairs from their high point on the 31st floor, making a quick, orderly egress.

As the men of Engine 7 and Ladder 8 were getting down the stairs as quickly as possible, Tardio credits faith for what happened next.

"For whatever reason, I don't know why—faith, luck. At the ninth or tenth floor, I stuck my head out the stairwell door, and I see Kevin Pfeifer, the Chief's brother. And he calls me over, I go over to the window and everything is falling outside. All debris is falling and he says 'You can't go out that stairway because it's going to lead you out into the mezzanine area.' And he says 'You're not going to get out that way.' So I say 'All right, we'll change stairwells,' which led us to the lobby."

So they changed stairwells.

As they were going down the new set of stairs, the one that assured they would get out onto the street without resistance, they came across a few fellow members of the FDNY stuck in the stairwell, trying to help a woman get out of the building.

Said Tardio, "Mikey Meldrum and Jay Jonas of Ladder 6 were in the stairwell at the fourth floor, and I said to them 'Guys, we have to get out, we have to go.' And they had this woman that they were helping to get out. She was a heavy-set woman, and she couldn't go anymore. They were looking for a chair or something to carry her. The guys knew we had to get out, but they had this woman with them and they were going to get out with that woman. They were willing to sacrifice themselves for her. They could have left her there, but that's just not what we do."

The firemen continued down in their orderly, prompt manner, making it to the ground floor to find an eerie scene.

"We made it down," Tardio said. "We hit the lobby, and everything was just covered in white. We have a command

post; it's just a magnetic board, something you'd use back in the '50s in grade school with magnets that say Engine 7, Engine 8. You put them on there and say 'Here's where they are,' helps the Chiefs keep track of everyone.

"The command post was abandoned and I joked about it. I said 'Wow, they abandoned the command post; that's not a good sign. Where the hell is everybody?'"

Tardio still had no idea the South Tower had collapsed as he made his way along one of the walls in the North Tower lobby out to the street.

Said Tardio, "Knowing that debris was coming down, we didn't bother looking up, we just put our heads down, hugged the wall and made it to Vessey Street.

"When I came out and I hit Vessey Street, I turned around and looked at the Marriott Hotel. It had like a 'V' in it, and I said 'Oh man, they blew that up too.'"

The South Tower was in a pile behind the North Tower, which was still blocking his view of where Two World Trade would have been.

"After we made it out," said Tardio. "I turned around, looked up, and the building starting collapsing on top, started to pancake down. So we went north, we started running.

"We got about a block in the 12 seconds it took to collapse, when we all took cover. You couldn't outrun that cloud. We tried to run, but you can't run in all that crap. I turned around, saw the mushroom [cloud] and thought 'I can't outrun this.' So I dove on the floor and covered up."

Tardio hit the ground, taking cover as best he could under his fire jacket, hoping that he would be able to cheat death again and make it through the collapse.

"Initially, I was hit with a blast of hot air. I said 'All right, I'm getting incinerated.' I figured that having seen it explode the way I did, with all the fire, that's what was happening."

Luckily, the heat from the collapse was not enough to kill the men, and the debris that was flying at this point was somewhat minimal, as Tardio and the rest of his company were a little over a block away from what was left of the World Trade Center.

"After the initial blast from the cloud," said Tardio. "I was getting pelted by small pieces of debris—nothing major."

The North Tower of the World Trade Center collapsed at 10:28 a.m., after burning from the explosion of a commercial jetliner for 102 minutes. All that was left of the two tallest towers in New York City—once the tallest in the world—was nothing more than an enormous pile of steel, dust, and other debris.

Looking back on getting out of the building in the fashion

they did, without a minute to spare, Tardio credits faith, luck, and of course, Kevin Pfeifer, who directed him to the correct stairway.

Kevin Pfeifer was directing people out of the building around the tenth floor, helping every person he could by pointing them towards the stairway that would lead them out. Unfortunately, for all the lives Kevin Pfeifer saved that day, one he could not save was his own. The Chief's brother did not make it out of the building.

Said Tardio, "If you zigged when you should have zagged, you were gone—it was that simple. Chief Pfeifer's brother saved my life... he saved a lot of lives."

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"The cloud didn't last very long," said Tardio. As I walked out, as I got further north, there were people there—reporters were in our face. And there was this woman and she said 'Would you like me to call someone?' And I said yeah, and gave her my phone number; she was taking the rest of the guys' numbers.

"There were reports of the Sears Tower being hit, the Eiffel Tower being hit, and I was just thinking 'What the hell is going on?' People were saying more planes were on the way; it was just so much misinformation.

"It's important to keep your head when everyone around you is losing theirs. After the tower collapsed, the first thing I had to do was find my guys, because once the building started to come down, we ran north.

"I figured my chauffeur was dead because his post was in the front of the building. Took about a half hour to find everyone, regroup, and we headed back down to Vessey Street."

When the men returned to the site, there was a call on the radio from firefighters that said they were trapped in the North Tower. It was Mikey Muldrum and Jay Jonas from Ladder 6, the two firefighters that were in the stairwell on the fourth floor trying to save the heavy-set woman.

Said Tardio, "When they gave the report over the radio to be rescued, they said 'we're in the North Tower, come and rescue us.' The Chief that took the call turned to us and said 'Where's the North Tower?'"

It turns out that the firefighters found a way to get down into the mall of the building. The place was essentially intact, and Muldrum and Jonas, and the woman they were with, were found and saved. They survived the collapse of the building in the stairwell at the fourth floor.

"They never moved from that spot," said Tardio. "The building came down, they all lived, just fell around them. They all lived.

"After the dust settled and I looked for my guys, I realized there was nothing there. It was just a pile of steel."

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Tardio and the men he was with from Engine 7 finally returned back to their firehouse around 5 p.m.

"When we were on our way back," said Tardio. "That's when World Trade 7 came down."

Seven World Trade finally collapsed to the ground at 5:20 p.m. due to falling debris structurally damaging the building. Several calls for internal fires on numerous floors were also reported.

Back at the firehouse, the scene was very emotional. Tardio walked in and immediately received hugs from everyone there. He began asking a question that seemed like it could only have one, inevitably nightmarish answer.

"Is everybody accounted for? Is everyone okay?"

Somehow, whether fate, luck or some other act of a higher being, every man from the house on Duane Street in Lower Manhattan, the one that housed Engine 7, Ladder 1, made it out alive.

"I can't believe we all made it out," said Tardio. "How did we make it out of that building? Thirty-seconds, another two flights higher... why am I alive when so many others are dead?"

The immediate reaction from a firefighter who realizes that kind of loss is instant hypothetical thinking.

One story higher, a left instead of a right. These were thoughts going through the minds of all of the men who made it out. They wondered what *could* have happened.

Said Tardio, "How do you explain it? We were the first ones on the scene and we all made it out. Had we been in quarters, we would have had more guys on the rig and I definitely wouldn't have grabbed the extra length of hose. I would have been much higher without that length of hose. Another flight higher and I would not have made it out of that building."

The fact that everyone from the firehouse was accounted for is something that not only can't be explained, it almost can't be fathomed. The second closest fire company to the World Trade Center, the first ones to respond, the first ones in the building, the first ones up the stairs, all made it out alive.

"Once we had everybody," said Tardio, "it was a big relief to know that everybody was safe. It's all luck; everything in life is luck. Shit happens. How the hell else could we explain anything? If you try to sit here and make sense of anything, you'd go insane. It's just luck, and we were lucky."

Tardio and the rest of the men of Engine 7, Ladder 1, spent the night back at what was already being called "Ground Zero," digging and searching, trying to rescue anyone who could have still been alive. He did not leave Manhattan until the following night, September 12.

When Tardio finally returned to his home in New Jersey, it was one of the most emotional moments of his life. His wife and daughter were waiting outside, along with people from the neighborhood. Everyone seemed to pull together in the time following the attacks.

Said Lorraine, "We were waiting outside for him; even the kids next door were running around yelling 'Dennis is home! Dennis is home!'"

He hugged his wife and daughter. Dennis was *finally* home.

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Looking back nearly a decade later, Tardio reflects on September 11, 2001, crediting intangibles, among other things, for making it out alive.

"I guess it was just fate, destiny," said Tardio. "If I didn't poke my head out the door and see Kevin [Pfeifer], I probably would have continued down those stairs, not been able to get out of them because of the debris, and maybe had to have gone up and over to another stairwell, and go down and... it just wouldn't have given us enough time."

Tardio made it out of the North Tower of the World Trade Center with less than a minute to spare before the building came crashing down onto the streets of Lower Manhattan. There are many small factors that could have changed the outcome of the morning, factors that could have trapped him in the tower, or simply not given him enough time to get out.

"As faith would have it," said Tardio. "On September 10, 2001, myself and my group of firefighters had a company medical. They take you out of service, you go to headquarters and they give you an x-ray, an EKG, take blood. So the tenth and eleventh of September, I didn't work a normal 24-hour shift. I worked a night tour and then a day tour. If I didn't have that medical, I may not have even been working on September 11."

"If I had someone extra, I would not have carried that extra hose, and I would have definitely gotten at least one more floor higher without that extra weight. That's all it would have taken, one more floor. That's how quick it all happened."

Tardio's original game plan of sticking together paid off in more ways than one. Engine 7, Ladder 1 did not lose one man on 9/11, and everyone he was with in the stairwell made it out. Everyone except one.

"The thing is that we all made it out, except for the

Lieutenant of [Ladder 8]. We teamed up, and we stayed together. Coming down the stairs to get out, I don't know, like I took my eyes off him for a second and I didn't know where he went. He just disappeared. I still don't know where he went. He didn't make it out.

"I don't know how, but I wish we could have helped more people. Almost 3,000 died. I don't see how we could have done more though. We did the best we could under the circumstances. You go to a fire in a private dwelling and you lose one person, it goes through your head all the time. 'What could I have done different?' You know, we take it personal when we lose someone ... nature of the job. But this was completely different than anything any of us had ever experienced.

"To lose one fireman is traumatic, but to lose 343 is just—I think about that number all the time and it just doesn't sink in, 343."

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Tardio was studying for the Chief's exam as the next step in his career in the FDNY. It was an obvious move that he assumed was the next logical step forward.

"I had plans to study for Chief," said Tardio. "I passed the Lieutenants exam on one try, I passed the Captain's exam on one try, and I think I would have been successful for the Chief's exam. I put the time in, it paid off for me."

That was before 9/11.

His attitude changed completely after that, and Dennis Tardio retired from the New York City Fire Department on March 31, 2002, after nearly 23 years on the job.

"It was just the right time; it wasn't fun anymore," said Tardio. "I didn't enjoy it anymore. It was depressing. Maybe if I got transferred to Staten Island or something I would have been OK. I couldn't be in that firehouse anymore after that."

Tardio spends his retired days at home with his family. Although he will never forget that morning, and how it changed his life and the lives of every American, life does go on.

Said Tardio, "You go down there now, and the sun shines on blocks it had never shone on before. In the beginning, it was like 'Something's wrong with this picture at 4 o'clock in the afternoon.' Then you realize... the Towers aren't there—so the light is actually shining on the block."

Although he lived through the most devastating terrorist attack on American soil, serving as a face of the heroes of the fateful day, Tardio still cannot fathom that the two tallest buildings in New York aren't distinctly defining the skyline of the greatest city in the world anymore.

"It's hard to believe they're not there—they're gone," said Tardio. "It did happen, right? It's not something that I'm going to close my eyes and open them again and I'm going to see the towers, right? They're not there." ●

Robert F. Kennedy in the Cuban Missile Crisis

Mohammed Khan

Course:

**Historical Methods
(HIST 260)**

Professor:

David Koistinen, History

Student:

Mohammed Khan

Analytic Research Essay:

“Robert F. Kennedy in the Cuban Missile Crisis”

Assignment:

This paper was written in History 260, Historical Methods. The principal assignment in the course is to research and write a paper based on research in primary sources. (Primary sources are documents and other artifacts created during the period when the events under study occurred.) Students come up with initial ideas for their papers. The first proposals are often too broad. The instructor then works with students to narrow the topics down to subjects on which substantive research in primary sources can be conducted during the space of a semester.

Instructor's Comments:

As I recall, Mohammed was first interested in the relationship between the Kennedy brothers during JFK's presidency. Over time we narrowed the topic down to Robert Kennedy's role in the Cuban Missile Crisis.

Mohammed's paper offers a novel interpretation of one aspect of the well-known events of the Cuban Missile Crisis. His analysis is based on careful examination of revealing primary sources. Mohammed lays out his story in a clear, well-organized fashion. The paper's conclusion demonstrates the relevance of this historical episode to contemporary policymaking debates. In all of these ways, Mohammed's work epitomizes what the best academic historical writing can do—whether authored by students or professors.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy's Presidency was marked with devastating failures and great triumphs. Almost immediately he was tested by the turbulent times around him. All the events that would shape his administration were tied into the titanic struggle of American democracy and Soviet communism. None were more crucial than the events of October 1962, now known to history as the Cuban Missile Crisis. An event that began as a gamble by Soviet Chairman Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev to test the resolve of the United States turned into a malevolent tide that threatened to sweep all of mankind in its path.

A significant portrait of American leadership emerged from the Crisis. Having learned the lessons of his ineptitude at the Bay of Pigs, President Kennedy was determined to have all possible options explored before he would ever commit to another military action. To do this he called on all his top advisors to counsel him on the path to his final decision. These “best and brightest” of the Kennedy administration would come to be known as the Executive Committee of the National Security Council: the ExComm. Of all these key figures one stood out as the perfect example of what made these deliberations so crucial; none other than the President's brother, Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy. The closest advisor to the President, RFK also became emblematic of the almost daily changing of opinions amongst the men who would split into two main camps: the “hawks” and the “doves.” RFK himself would start out as the former but by the end of the Crisis he favored a more diplomatic resolution. This is in contradiction to the generally perceived idea asserted by such

Kennedy historians as Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. that “... Robert Kennedy was a dove from the start” (Schlesinger 507). The atmosphere of the meetings was one of intense back and forth debating. The men who comprised this group came to the Crisis with a firm belief in their opinions. But as the meetings went on, errors in planning were revealed and minds changed. This was the greatest mark of the ExComm and its members. The problem presented by the Cuban Missile Crisis was complex and it would take equally complex minds to prevent it from engulfing the world in a nuclear holocaust.

The Cuban Missile Crisis was one of the central events in the long struggle between two ideologies: the United States of America and Western Capitalism against the Soviet Union and Eastern European Communism. The two superpowers faced each other down over the issue of nuclear missiles that were furnished to Cuba by the Soviet Union. This was a violation of the United States' foreign policy, and the US took action both to prevent further missiles from going to Cuba and to remove the missiles that were already there. Instead of direct military action, President Kennedy decided to use a blockade around Cuba to exert pressure on the Soviet Union and Chairman Khrushchev to prevent them from delivering any more missiles. The President also used diplomatic measures to have those missiles already in Cuba removed. At the conclusion of the Crisis a deal was arranged that would see the removal of US missiles in Turkey in exchange for the Soviet missiles in Cuba. There were moments of great tension for both sides over these thirteen days in October 1962.

Understanding the depth of these thirteen days becomes easier thanks to the President's secret taping of almost all ExComm meetings. In an unprecedented move JFK secretly taped these conversations using microphones hidden around the White House in places such as the Cabinet Room, the Situation Room and the Oval Office itself. These tapes illuminate the decision making process of all key members including Robert Kennedy.

Robert Kennedy's advice underwent a gradual shift in the various responses the ExComm oversaw during its deliberations. They ranged from an immediate military response to a diplomatic approach involving the US and its allies. Robert Kennedy was not associated with the diplomacy doves from the beginning as some historians have asserted. In fact his remarks at the outset of these meetings reveal a very hawkish Attorney General who wanted to go a step further than an air strike and actually invade Cuba. Though at the conclusion he became of the same mind as his brother, the examination must begin as always at the beginning.

The first meeting of the ExComm took place on Tuesday, October 16th at 11:50AM. The photos of the missile bases in Cuba were presented to President Kennedy and his advisors. After digesting the evidence the President's cabinet members outlined what they believed to be appropriate responses. Secretary of State Dean Rusk opened with two options: an air strike against the missile installations and a more diplomatic approach that included the Organization of American States and a conciliatory message to Cuba. Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara outlined in more detail what a potential air strike would entail. He deferred to Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Maxwell Taylor to define the exact

strategy that would be employed. At this point Gen. Taylor brought forth the third option of an air strike followed by an invasion of Cuba. As discussion moved forward on the options Attorney General Robert Kennedy's opinion as a proponent of military intervention appeared. He returned to the idea of an air strike followed by an immediate invasion. The President asked what a timeline of an invasion might look like and McNamara responded that "It's a bare 7 days after the air strike..." (May 66). RFK asked "Is it absolutely essential that you wait 7 days after you have an air strike?" (May 67). Gen. Taylor responded that an airdrop of the Marines could be set up to go in five days and "That might do the trick if this is really a national upheaval" (May 68). By this he meant if the situation in Cuba got completely out of control and order had to be restored. RFK's comments in response to Taylor shed light on his thinking:

I just think that 5 days, even a 5-day period—the United States is going to be under such pressure by everybody not to do anything. And there's going to be also pressure on the Russians to do something against us. If you could get it in, get it started so that there wasn't any turning back, they couldn't...(May 68)

World opinion would be against an invasion of Cuba by the US, and he believed that waiting too long would let this opportunity escape. He later also inquired, "How long would it take to take over the island?" (May 74). Robert Kennedy's entire contribution to the first meeting of the ExComm was based around an invasion of Cuba. He was determined to keep that as a viable option and his speech regarding the idea was very blunt and direct. Whereas the other members deliberated on the issue in a stately manner, Robert Kennedy got to the point and fast.

That first meeting of October 16th sheds further light on this opinion of RFK. As the President talks about a "general strike,"⁷ Robert Kennedy inquires if this too would "encompass an invasion?" (May 94). The President corrects his position by saying "that's the third course" (May 94). Here again the invasion is brought up by Robert Kennedy and not for the last time. Later in the same meeting Bobby conjectured about the Cuban position:

"Mr. President, while we're considering this problem tonight, I think that we should also consider what Cuba's going to be a year from now, or 2 years from now. Assume that we go in and knock these sites out. I don't know what's gonna stop them from saying: 'We're gonna build the sites 6 months from now, bring them in [again]. Where are we 6 months from now? Or that we're in any better position? Or aren't we in

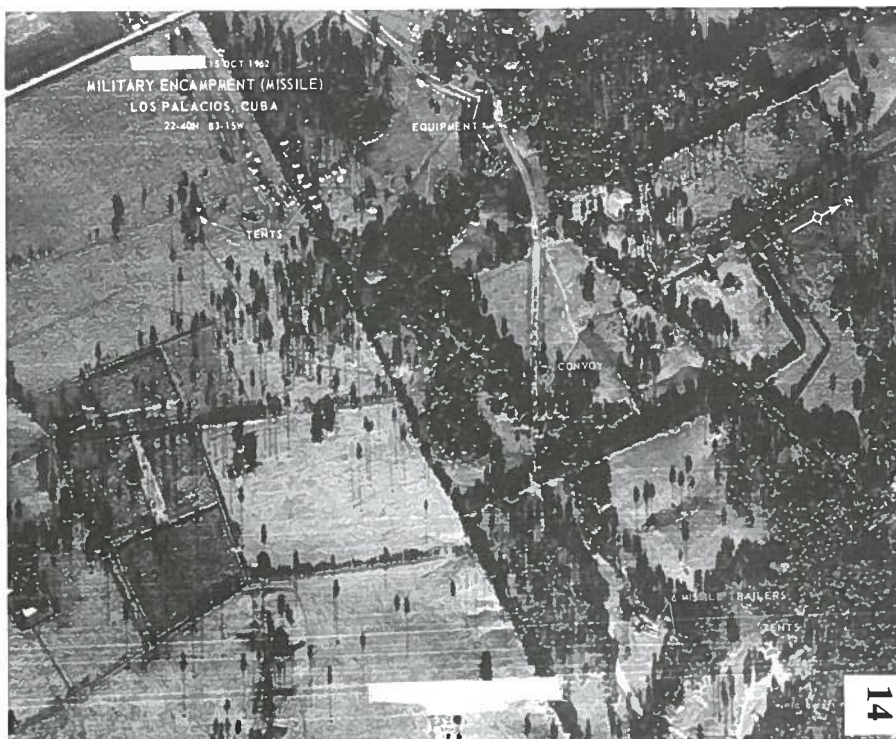


image source:
http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:U-2_photo_during_Cuban_Missile_Crisis.jpg

Here he questioned the effectiveness of an air strike without an invasion. If the United States destroyed these missiles then Castro would just have them replaced with new ones. An air strike would not prevent further threats from Cuba as a missile base for the Russians. RFK further tied this into the Soviet position and this illustrates his argument in favor of the invasion of Cuba:

RFK's argument for an air strike followed by an invasion is seen clearly here. If Khrushchev was determined to make Cuba a missile base, then an air strike simply would not be enough. He would replace his lost missiles with new ones. If the Soviets decided to furnish Cuba with more missiles, they would be running the blockade and this would mean direct engagement with Russian ships. Wouldn't it behoove the United States to simply invade and negate Cuba completely as a threat? The other key point the Attorney General made here is regarding escalation. If the United States intervened at this point in Cuba, then at most they would have killed some Russian nationals that were working on the missile sites. They would also have lost some of their own ground forces in the process. As bad as that might have made the situation, it could potentially have worsened down the road if President Kennedy had to order an attack on Russian ships and submarines, a decision that surely would cause the outbreak of another world war.

[illegible]

Secretary Douglas Dillon and Director of the CIA John McCone. The third proposal was a blockade of Cuba to halt the Soviet reaction to the decision made by the United States, followed by further actions: this was brought to the meeting by Secretary of State Dean Rusk. The fourth and final was a blockade of Cuba followed by negotiations to get rid of the missiles. The main proponents of this were Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and Special Counsel and Advisor to the President Ted Sorensen. Ultimately President John F. Kennedy decided upon the fourth as the key to resolving the Crisis. It is during these presentations that you see once again RFK's initial position but also exactly where he turns to the other camp.

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gradual change in RFK's position. Though not switching outright to the blockade and negotiation plan proposed by McNamara and Sorensen, he did have this to say:

The Attorney General said that in his opinion a combination of the blockade route and the air strike was very attractive to him. He felt that we should first institute the blockade. In the event that the Soviets continued to build up missile capability in Cuba, then we should inform the Russians that we would destroy the missiles, the launchers, and the missile sites. He said he favored a short wait during which time the Russians could react to the blockade. If the Russians did not halt the development of the missile capability, then we would proceed to make an air strike. The advantage of proceeding in this way, he added, was that we would get away from the Pearl Harbor surprise aspect of the air strike route. (May 196).

The change here was more towards Dean Rusk's initial proposal of a blockade to freeze Soviet reaction and then a waiting game to see what they would do and what the United States would do in turn. The mention of Pearl Harbor was a part of the American leadership's way of thinking and something that all members of the meetings wanted to avoid. The Japanese surprise attack had been condemned by the United States as cowardly and they considered any such action taken by them to be opposed to their ideals as a country. The meeting concluded with a general consensus amongst those present that an air strike would be a point of no return. It would force Khrushchev into a corner from which he would have to respond with comparable military action. Another incident to note during this meeting was the appearance of a proposal that would later become crucial in resolving this Crisis. Ambassador to the United Nations Adlai Stevenson suggested "...that we offer the Russians a settlement involving the withdrawal of our missiles from Turkey and our evacuation of Guantanamo base" (May 199). Although the idea of giving up Guantanamo was "sharply rejected" (May 199) by the President, the missile trade of Turkey for Cuba became something that all parties would be willing to consider at a further date. The primary concern was having the missiles in Cuba removed and/or destroyed. In future discussions it was widely accepted that any dealings with the Russians would exclude the direct missile-trade negotiations. Khrushchev would have to remove his missiles, and if at some point the United States decided to remove theirs from Turkey, it would not be so overtly a part of this specific moment.

The meeting of the 22nd saw another turn in Robert Kennedy's proposal for an air strike followed by an invasion or a blockade and negotiations. An account of this meeting was given by Robert McNamara. The meeting opened with a detailed outline of what a potential air strike would look like. Gen. Taylor stated: "The best we can offer you is to destroy 90% of the known missiles" (May 206). Thus this strike would have to be followed by more, and those would "inevitably lead to an invasion" (May 206). The President then asked RFK what

he thought of the air strike:

[Robert Kennedy] stated he was opposed to such a strike because:

- (1) "It would be a Pearl Harbor type of attack."
- (2) It would lead to unpredictable military responses by the Soviet Union which could be so serious as to lead to general nuclear war.

He stated we should start with the initiation of the blockade and thereafter "play for the breaks." (May 207).

It becomes clear at this point that Robert Kennedy no longer viewed his initial idea as a viable option. The consequences of an air strike would be dire. Inevitably they would lead to an invasion regardless if one would be planned for or not. A strict blockade at least allowed Khrushchev some room to maneuver. In the same meeting Ambassador Stevenson suggested that a meeting be arranged between President Kennedy and Chairman Khrushchev. The President and some of his advisors responded that any such engagement would make the United States' position appear weak. If we did not first resolve the matter of the nuclear threat from Cuba, a meeting would "... appear to outsiders that our only response to Khrushchev's challenge was to negotiate" (May 210). RFK also replied to Stevenson, "... we should anticipate a Soviet reaction involving a movement in Berlin" (May 210).

The Berlin factor is crucial to understanding any and all American dealings with the Soviet Union. It was in many ways the central front of the Cold War. Almost all strategic planning in this period was done around the question: What would happen to Berlin? President Kennedy and many others firmly believed that if the United States moved on Cuba then Khrushchev would move on Berlin. While Kennedy at times admitted that Berlin might eventually be lost, his response to this would be a nuclear missile strike on Russian sites that would eventually lead to a general missile exchange. Why was the United States so adamant on keeping the Soviets from capturing Berlin? Victors of the Second World War believed that appeasement to Adolf Hitler at Munich had been a direct cause of the outbreak. Had British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain not acquiesced to the Fuhrer's hegemony, further escalation could have been prevented. Two decades later, the United States would not give anything to the Soviets in fear that they would march into all of Western Europe. Although in hindsight this might seem slightly difficult to comprehend, this was a fear that American leadership lived with on a day to day basis (May 2).

October 27th was possibly the grimmest day of the entire Crisis. Known amongst the Kennedy cabal as Black Saturday, it would prove to be the most trying time for the entire administration. The key moment was spread over two days, from the 26th to the 27th. The administration received two letters from Khrushchev. The first arrived on the 26th some

time between 6 and 9PM. Given the content and the emotion of the letter, the ExComm concluded that it was written by Khrushchev himself. In it Khrushchev went to great lengths to reconcile the terrible situation that he had put into motion. The Chairman proposed that no Soviet ships carrying arms would be sent to Cuba. In return the United States should not invade and would not support any force that would disrupt Castro's government. The conciliatory letter was generally well received by the President and his cabinet. However, the following day a second letter would further exacerbate an already tenuous situation. More political in its demeanor, this letter instead proposed, quid pro quo, that the Russian missiles in Cuba would be removed if the United States would remove their missiles from Turkey. Confused by this complication, the ExComm concluded that this missive was the official line of the Politburo. RFK's response to this was in line with what was discussed earlier when Ambassador Stevenson had urged a missile trade:

The bases in Cuba involve the security of the Western hemisphere. This is not just a question of the United States. This is a question of all Latin American countries. All have joined together in this effort. Time is running out on us. This must be brought to fruition. The question of the Turkish bases – which is excellent that you brought that up – in that there should be disarmament of the Turkish bases. But that has nothing to do with the security of the Western Hemisphere. (May 511).

The question of the missile trade was not open for negotiation as it pertained to the missiles in Cuba. If there was ever going to be a negotiation it would occur after the Crisis in Cuba had been resolved.

October 28th marked the beginning of the end of the Cuban Missile Crisis. Chairman Khrushchev delivered a radio broadcast that stated he would dismantle the Soviet missiles if he were guaranteed the United States would not interfere in communist Cuba. President Kennedy replied in a letter that the U.S. would not invade or engage in actions to destabilize Castro's government. He also hinted at future disarmament of nuclear weapons, most likely referring to the U.S. missiles in Turkey. Robert Kennedy was central in the discussions that led up to this as it was he who delivered the message to Soviet Ambassador to the United States Anatoly Dobrynin. In their talks he refused to give Dobrynin guarantees on the Turkey issue. As he had said before, the U.S. would not do anything until the Cuban missile issue was resolved. Ultimately the Soviets agreed. The missiles in Cuba were removed and in April of 1963 the U.S., through NATO, disarmed the missiles in Turkey.

That a nuclear exchange between the two supreme powers of the day had been prevented is a testament to the leadership of President Kennedy. He had held off the militaristic hawks within his own administration by including every opinion he could get his hands on into the ExComm. These meetings

were able to discuss and examine all the options before the President. Robert Kennedy was a shining example of these various opinions and the virtue of such a committee. He had been a major proponent of military action but upon examining further evidence presented by his colleagues, he saw the threats involved if that course were to be taken. The "might is right" doctrine had been put aside, and the President and his cabinet gracefully maneuvered through the rough waters of the Crisis.

The lessons of these deliberations are more important now than ever given the gravity of our time. Had President George W. Bush convened his cabinet in a similar manner instead of being determined to invade Iraq, it is possible that the great debacle of our time could have been prevented. Clearly there were voices in opposition, but were they heard? Were they given the opportunity to air out their grievances with the plan that set this war in motion? The evidence seems otherwise. The unilateral course taken by President Bush and his neo-conservatives stands in stark contrast to that taken by President Kennedy and the ExComm, who made sure to safeguard the prestige of the United States in the world by engaging both allies and enemies in the ideological Cold War with the Soviet Union. John F. Kennedy had seen first hand the cruelty of war when he served in the Navy during the Second World War and he was determined not to let such a disaster fall upon his country and the people of the earth during his Presidency.

Robert Kennedy's loyalty to his brother can never be questioned. That he was in opposition to him at the outset is outweighed by the fact that the President valued his counsel above all the others. The work of the ExComm shows that the President had been right in including the young Attorney General in the meetings. Robert Kennedy was headstrong and absolutely firm in his convictions. That a man like him could see the error of his judgment was the virtue of the Executive Committee of the National Security Council. ●

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Two Countries, Two Brothers, One Revolution

Brian Saccomanno

Course:

**English Literature:
Romantic to Modern
(ENG 302)**

Professor:

Barbara Suess, English

Student:

Brian Saccomanno

**Research Essay/Screen Play:
“Two Countries, Two
Brothers, One Revolution:
Two Brothers View the Irish
Revolution (1916-1921)
from the Points of View of
Edmund Burke and Thomas
Paine”**

Assignment:

Option 1: Write a literary historical “dialogue” in the form of a play, a short story, or a narrative poem, featuring any two authors we’ve read this semester. The dialogue should consist of a conversation that allows you to compare and contrast the authors’ literary and aesthetic beliefs and, where appropriate, social and political beliefs. For instance, William Blake and William Butler Yeats could discuss the value of revolutionary thinking and action; H. Rider Haggard and Mary Kingsley might talk about how one should represent the ethnic or national “other” in literature; or William Wordsworth and John Keats could evaluate the role of nature and of the first-person narrator in their respective works. While you are free to use any of these suggestions, they are just that—suggestions. So, as the Romantics advocate, use your imagination!

Be sure that your dialogue makes direct reference to (at least) one of each author’s works. Also, develop the “characters” in your dialogue in such a way that their actions, diction, and points of view provide some insight into the authors’ personalities, to the extent that you can infer these factors through their writing and through biographical and literary/critical research.

Your paper should be 6 to 8 pages long if you write a play, a short story, or a paper. Given that you’d need to attend more closely to issues of meter, line-length, figurative language, etc. in a narrative poem, it can be shorter.

Use MLA-style parenthetical citations for quotations and provide a Works Cited page using MLA guidelines. (Or, if you prefer, use Chicago Style. Just be consistent.)

Instructor’s Comments:

Brian’s screenplay was written in response to an assignment in which I encourage students to develop an argument about a selection of British, Irish, and postcolonial literature of the Romantic, Victorian, and/or Modernist period in ways that allow them to step outside the bounds of the traditional essay format. I was pleased that Brian went the extra step to make this project personal by building his argument using *The Wind That Shakes the Barley*, a film he saw outside of class and that stirred him. Developing the fictional characters, Damien and Teddy O’Donovan, within this tightly constructed and emotionally potent scene, Brian has crafted a well-researched paper that articulates the deep political divides that led to the Irish Civil War. Moreover, he cleverly uses texts we read for class—excerpts from Edmund Burke’s *Reflections* on the Revolution in France and Thomas Paine’s *The Rights of Man*—in order to intellectually ground this creative and inspired paper.

Overview

I would like to write from the perspectives of two brothers from Ireland in the early part of the 20th century, and their ideas on revolution, specifically the Irish Revolution against British rule, which took place between 1916 and 1921. I was inspired by a film called *The Wind That Shakes the Barley* produced in 2006 about two brothers who choose different sides in the conflict concerning the Irish Revolution, British Rule, and the Anglo-Irish treaty of 1921. The movie title also reflects the ideas of a traditional Irish song about Irish soldiers going off to war against Great Britain. I would like to propose an argument between these brothers concerning the revolution and the subsequent treaty. The first brother, Damien O’Donovan, adopts the view of Thomas Paine and the common man. He is a member of the IRA concerned that Ireland is still broken up into two factions, and that Ireland has still not completely gained its independence from Great

Britain. The second brother, Teddy O’Donovan, is a member of the National Army who adopts the perspective of Edmund Burke and his conservative traditional view of revolution. Teddy believes that the Treaty is the law, and that his brother is upsetting the natural order of society. I chose to write the conversation in the form of several scenes from a screenplay. What follows is my interpretation of a conversation that could have taken place during this time period concerning the revolution, adopting the views of Thomas Paine and Edmund Burke.

**Synopsis of the Irish Revolution 1916-1921
and the Irish Republican Army**

The IRA, otherwise known as the Irish Republican Army, was formed in 1913 and staged a rebellion known as The Easter Rising in the same year. This rebellion was staged as a direct retaliation against British rule. The IRA continued to wage

guerilla warfare against England throughout the Irish Revolution. They were very successful and were largely responsible for bringing England to the negotiating table to discuss a ceasefire to the violence of the revolution. In 1921 the Anglo-Irish treaty was signed bringing freedom to Southern Ireland (which became known as the Irish Free State), but leaving Northern Ireland under British rule. After the signing of the Anglo-Irish Treaty, the IRA split into factions. The majority of the IRA was opposed to the treaty because they believed Ireland should become its own republic independent of Great Britain. The IRA members who disagreed broke off and became part of the National Army of Ireland, including its leader and founder Michael Collins. What came next was the Irish Civil War, and the IRA continued to fight in order to unite Ireland as one independent free country.

The Wind That Shakes the Barley

This Irish folk song was written to honor the men who had been fighting against English rule in the 18th century. They often used Barley as provisions while they traveled in the field. The barley symbolizes the unmarked graves of these men because it is believed that when these men fell in battle the barley fell out of their pockets and the seed was planted in the ground. The song still remains important to Irish culture and history and was recently popularized by singer Lisa Gerrard and her band *Dead Can Dance*.

Song Lyrics (Celtic-Lyrics.com)

*I sat within the valley green, I sat me with my true love
My sad heart strove the two between, the old love and the new love
The old for her, the new that made me think on Ireland dearly
While soft the wind blew down the glen and shook the golden barley
'Twas hard the woeful words to frame to break the ties that bound us
But harder still to bear the shame of foreign chains around us
And so I said, "The mountain glen I'll seek at morning early
And join the bold united men, while soft winds shake the barley"
While sad I kissed away her tears, my fond arms round her flinging
The foeman's shot burst on our ears from out the wildwood ringing
A bullet pierced my true love's side in life's young spring so early
And on my breast in blood she died while soft winds shook the barley
But blood for blood without remorse I've taken at Oulart Hollow
And laid my true love's clay cold corpse where I full soon may follow
As round her grave I wander drear, noon, night and morning early
With breaking heart when e'er I hear the wind that shakes the barley*

Cast of Characters

Damien O'Donovan: brother to Teddy O'Donovan. He is a current member of the IRA and believes in the revolution and separation from England. He adopts the views of Thomas Paine.

Teddy O'Donovan: brother to Damien O'Donovan. He is a current member of the National Army who supports the Anglo-Irish Treaty. He adopts the views of Edmund Burke.

ACT I SCENE I

Afternoon at an IRA safe house March 15, 1922. Sounds of gunfire can be heard, followed by the raised voices of men from the National Army.

Enter Damien running into an empty room.

Damien: I give up my arms.

Damien drops his handgun, drops to his knees, and puts his hands behind his head. Several men from the National Army rush into the room with guns out. One soldier roughly snaps Damien's arms behind his back and handcuffs him.

Enter Teddy.

Teddy: Damien O'Donovan, I place you under arrest for crimes against Ireland and Great Britain. You will be brought to prison and summarily executed at dawn unless you cooperate with us and give up the names of your co-conspirators and give us the locations of the remaining safe houses of the Irish Republican Army.

The soldiers of the National Army drag Damien to his feet and shove him out of the room.

SCENE 2

National Army Station, Ireland, the night of March 15, 1922. Damien O'Donovan sits in a small wooden chair leaning over an empty wooden table with a small candle that is lit. His hands are cuffed and folded in front of him on the table. He is looking down when the cell door is unlocked and Teddy walks into the room. The door is closed and locked by a guard outside the room.

Teddy: Mr. O'Donovan, I am here to talk to you and gather information about other members of the IRA. Your cooperation is expected in this matter, or I will be forced to execute you under the jurisdiction of the law. Unlike you and your co-conspirators, we do not take life unjustly or without cause.

Teddy sits down in the chair directly opposite of Damien.

Damien: Nor do I or my brothers-in-arms take life unjustly, brother!

Damien raises his head and stares into Teddy's eyes.

Damien (continued): Why do you call me by my proper name? Are we not brothers of the same blood? Are we not citizens of Ireland, a country who cries for her full independence from the oppressors of England? I do not take the life of anyone unless they suppress my freedom, and the freedom of all the children of Ireland.

Teddy: Mr. O'Donovan, that is not the answer for civilized and rational men. This conflict has been solved by pen and paper. What you do is senseless violence. You even murder the men of Ireland who you claim to be your brothers.



Damien: Aye, they may be of Ireland, my brother, but they are traitors just the same. For if anyone of any nation sides against our cause, they are traitors, and as traitors they will be removed at any cost. As with any war, there must be sacrifices.

Teddy reaches into his pocket and offers a cigarette to Damien. Damien accepts with a nod, and places it in his mouth. He lights the cigarette with the candle on the table.

Teddy: Mr. O'Donovan, I am trying to teach you the error of your ways. Violence is not the answer. Law and order is the natural way of things. What the IRA does is upset this order. What you do upsets Ireland and her people, not protects them. It is for God to decide how men die, not you and your upstarts.

Damien: Brother, let me tell you about a man who believed in revolution and its necessity. His name was Thomas Paine and he supported not only revolution, but the rights of the common man. His treatise from *The Rights of Man* explained that the principle was more important than any one person. He said, "When it becomes necessary to do a thing, the whole heart and soul should go into the measure" (Paine 123). What I fight for, what the IRA fights for, is this idea, this principle. And the principle is that the Anglo-Irish Treaty has failed the whole of our nation.

Teddy: No, Mr. O'Donovan, what you fight for is chaos and disorder. You and your men go against the natural order that God has given us. Ireland must fall into its place and become a dominion of England as stated in the treaty. What the IRA does is upset this order and the way things ought to be. You must allow the law to govern the people.

When the people take things into their own hands, only folly and disruption of society will ensue. As Mr. Edmund Burke so eloquently phrased this doctrine in *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, "The institutions of policy, the goods of fortune, the gifts of providence, are handed down to us, and from us, in the same course and order. Our political system is placed in a just correspondence and symmetry with the order of the world, and with the mode of existence decreed to a permanent body composed of transitory parts" (Burke 105). What you fail to understand is that Ireland is a small part of the whole. That whole is the British Empire that Ireland is now part of. We have a part to play as a nation, and that is to fall in line and be under the rule of Great Britain as dictated by the law.

Damien: No, brother. The natural order is when men stand up for what they believe when they have been failed by their government, and to abolish any government that has thus failed the people it is meant to govern.

Teddy: I will return in the morning, Mr. O'Donovan, when you have had a good night's rest to think upon these matters and see the error of your ways. Good night and may God keep you, and give you insight.

Teddy stands up and exits the room. The cell door is locked. Damien puts the cigarette out on the ground. He puts his head in his hands in quiet contemplation. The candle goes out.

ACT II SCENE I

Dawn at the station of the National Army. Keys rattle, and Damien awakes from his crude bed in the corner of his prison cell. Teddy enters holding some parchment and ink. He sits down at the table and places the ink and parchment on it. Damien sits down opposite of Teddy, his hands still cuffed.

Teddy: Mr. Damien O'Donovan, with God as my witness, I give you one last chance to redeem yourself. By signing this document, you will be agreeing to pleading guilty to crimes against the government. You will give us the names of prominent IRA members and the locations of all the IRA safe houses and weapon storage facilities. In return, your life will be spared, and you will be given life in prison. If you refuse to sign this document, I am ordered by the law of the land to execute you for your crimes. What say you?

Damien: I cannot in good conscience give up my comrades, for theirs is a just cause. You say the law is the final word. I say a law only remains unchanged because it was not willing to be changed. England does not have the right to claim sovereignty over Ireland, and I will not stand idly by because of tradition. I will not fall in line and accept the

status quo. I accept death over injustice.

Teddy: So be it. I have done my best to talk sense into you. Guards, come take Mr. O'Donovan to the yard for execution.

Teddy stands up and faces the audience.

Teddy (to the audience): If only Mr. O'Donovan would accept the laws that are in place he would be spared. The constituent parts of a state are obliged to hold their public faith with each other, and with all those who derive any serious interest under their engagements, as much as the whole state is bound to keep its faith with separate communities (Burke 104). Otherwise competence and power would soon be confounded, and no law be left but the will of a prevailing force (Burke 104). And the people would do well to remember their place in society and keep its order, lest the law and its caretakers are forced to bring action upon those who would seek to destroy that order. May God keep them and bring them insight to understand the traditional values and laws of society.

Exit Teddy.

The cell guards stand on either side of Damien as he is ushered out of the room. The document remains unsigned on the table.

SCENE 2

The guards walk Damien over to a pole and tie him to it and exit. A line of soldiers stand at the ready with rifles at their sides. Next to them stands Teddy dressed in full uniform.

Damien (to the audience): My brothers and sisters who fight for freedom, hear me. Do not give up the principles of our fight. Do not allow yourselves to fall into tradition and accept the way things are until they are set aright. Revolutions are about the principles of change. My brother, Teddy, who believes in his precious law and his order does not realize that we seek what is right for Ireland and its children. But what we now see in the world, from the Revolutions of America and France, are a renovation of the natural order of things, a system of principles as universal truth and the existence of man, and combining moral with political happiness and national prosperity (Paine 125). May the life I give up today and the lives of those who died before me help bring about a free Ireland.

Gun shots are fired. Damien slumps. The lights fade.

End.

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